

ARENA

The background of the cover is a vibrant orange-red gradient. In the center is a stylized, high-contrast face of a woman with closed eyes and full lips. Below this central face are two green theatrical masks, one on the left and one on the right, both with wide-open mouths. The overall aesthetic is graphic and modern.

ON ANARCHIST
CINEMA

Guest edited by Richard Porton

NO 1

ARENA

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ANARCHIST FILM & VIDEO





Anarchist Film and Video

Edited by
Richard Porton

'The cinema is not an art which films life: the cinema is something between art and life. Unlike painting and literature, the cinema both gives to life and takes from it, and I try to render this concept in my films. Literature and painting both exist as art from the very start; the cinema doesn't.'

—Jean-Luc Goddard

'What is Cinema? We might as well ask "What is life?", for film, like life, is made of moments; moments in time, held aloft for our perusal, imprinted on our soul, and then brought back to us from time to time as a memory -- by an event, a vision, a sound, an emotion. The separation becomes trivial -- cinema is life, and life cinema: around us, beside us, inside us. The cinema, then, is not to be consumed with haste; films are not to be digested simply as they unfold, like some plastic-wrapped fast-food. Created by light and celluloid, they live only in our minds and in our hearts, savoured both during and after the fact. Projected onto the screen and into our consciousness, where they are replayed over and over -- continually re-discovered artefacts which are constantly changing us. What, then, can we say is truly real? A memory? An event? A celluloid image? The answer lies in the cinema. All is real. Nothing is impossible.'

— Glen Norton

ANARCHIST FILM AND VIDEO

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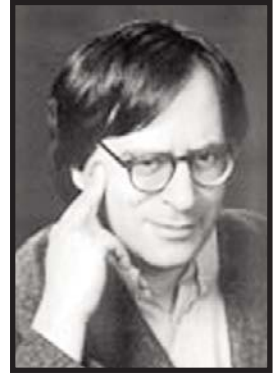
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INTRODUCTION

Richard Porton

Attempting to sum up the relationship between film and anarchism is as challenging as pinpointing the affinities between painters, musicians, novelists, poets, playwrights, and the anti-authoritarian tradition. If we speak of “anarchist cinema,” are we referring to films about the historical experience of anarchists and anarchism or films with an anarchist impetus that might have been made by non-anarchists? Just as anarchist motifs permeate the work of both the realist painter Gustave Courbet and the modernist Pablo Picasso, is an anarchist cinematic aesthetic more visible in the documentary reportage of newsreels produced by the CNT during the Spanish Revolution or in the surrealist films of Luis Buñuel — clearly an anti-clerical and anti-authoritarian director, if not precisely anarchist from a literal-minded political perspective? (He supported the Communist Party during the Spanish Civil War and once told Joel Sucher and Steven Fischler of the Pacific Street Film Collective that he didn’t consider himself “good enough” to be an anarchist.) In fact, even Stuart Christie, our publisher and a man with a profound knowledge of, and empathy for, the anarchist tradition, admitted to Duncan Campbell in *The Guardian* that “many films made by anarchists are boring” and that he was fond of many anti-authoritarian films made by non-anarchists.



Richard Porton

Similar questions bedeviled me while I was working on *Film and the Anarchist Imagination* some years ago. While films celebrating heroic anarchists were unquestionably well intentioned, they were also occasionally dull and plodding. Subversive masterpieces such as Jean Vigo’s *Zéro de Conduite* (*Zero for Conduct*) were rare exceptions. The singular beauty of Vigo’s film resides in a seamless fusion of style and content. This lyrical ode to revolt is both stylistically and thematically incendiary; Vigo doesn’t need to advocate

anarchism in a dry, didactic fashion — the film itself embodies anti-authoritarian fervor with unparalleled brio and humor. Given the difficulty of sorting out the many paradoxes that arise from an assessment of film and the anti-authoritarian tradition, certain critics gave me a hard time for claiming that the anarchist aesthetic is not monolithic and remains, to a certain extent, “elusive”. Although it rather astonished me that some anarchists were, in effect, chiding me for not advocating a more prescriptive, or arguably “authoritarian” aesthetic stance, I would only argue that, despite disparate styles and political origins, most “anarchist films” (however defined) — promote self-emancipation and derive inspiration, whether consciously or not, from the tradition of decentralized anarchist pedagogy. Although pedagogy often has unsavory, coercive connotations in the context of mainstream education, it is clear from the writings of the proto-anarchist utopian Charles Fourier, as well as his consciously anarchist progeny, that pedagogy can be anti-hierarchical while fusing pleasure with instruction and edification.

An implicit commitment to a non-coercive, subversive form of pedagogy animates this anthology on cinema and anarchism and it's quite apt that Isabelle Marinone's article “Educational Cinema: A Libertarian Intervention” focuses on the efforts of Gustave Cauvin to disabuse his fellow anarchists of their assumption that cinema was irredeemably bourgeois. Marinone demonstrates how the ‘Cinéma du Peuple’, “the very first cinema cooperative in France... to produce militant films to target a worker audience” served as a precursor to a host of (mostly non-anarchist) French film collectives that served as a challenge to the myth of the autonomous auteur. The noted militant Armand Guerra directed several ‘Cinéma du Peuple’ productions; his film on the Paris Commune is perhaps the best known and is said to have been a particular inspiration to the anarchist painter Maximilien Luce. Eric Jarry's article on the Cinema du Peuple cooperative venture, and translations of documents by Guerra himself and his daughter, round out the portrait of a cinematic endeavor that sought to both raise the “intellectual level of the people” and “do away with wage slavery by means of an economic transformation of society.”

Pedagogical imperatives also come to the fore in this volume within Emeterio Diez's discussion of the role of film in the Spanish Revolution and Civil War. The films of the CNT-

FAI, in addition to having performed the traditional functions of agitation and propaganda traditionally embraced by a political faction during wartime, are now important documents that illuminate the anarchist experiments in self-management during the early days of revolutionary upheaval. Diez's discussion of the anarchist "socialization" of the Spanish film industry — particularly attempts to assert workers' control over the realms of production and exhibition — is the most complete treatment of the subject I am aware of. While Diez ultimately pinpoints major contradictions that stymied the socialization process (which included internecine conflicts among the anarchists themselves and the cinemas' dependence upon Hollywood film which clashed blatantly with the CNT-FAI's revolutionary ethos), his article nevertheless chronicles a seminal utopian moment in the history of the anarchist movement.

Of course, most filmgoers are more familiar with contemporary evocations of the Spanish Revolution such as Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom* and Vicente Aranda's *Libertarias* than with the films actually produced by the CNT-FAI. Focusing on the role of women in revolutionary Spain, Andrew H. Lee's critique of *Libertarias* helpfully disentangles many of the caricatures and misrepresentations of 'anarcha-feminism' that surface in Aranda's superficially well-intentioned film. Preferring historical sobriety to Aranda's titillating, if empty, historical pastiche, Lee heartily recommends Lisa Berger and Carol Mazer's *...All Our Lives*, a documentary on the 'Mujeres Libres' (the anarchist women's organization founded in Spain in 1936).

From a much different vantage point, Dan Georgakas' analysis of Theo Angelopoulos' *Alexander the Great* examines another sort of historical film altogether — an elaborate allegory that imagines the lineage of a rural Greek anarchist commune that simultaneously critiques the authoritarian tendencies of the left during the Greek Civil War of 1944-1949. Georgakas ably demonstrates that Angelopoulos' *Alexander* — a fictional brigand unrelated to the conqueror enshrined by filmmakers such as Oliver Stone — encapsulates the lost promise of a libertarian left championed by Greece's most distinguished living director.

The fact that anarchist cinema is known at all during this era of globalization and cultural homogenization is at least partially attributable to the proliferation of anarchist film

festivals (as well as ongoing online film festivals such as the ChristieBooks/ Brightcove “Anarchist Film Channel”) ushered in by Pietro Ferrua’s path breaking event in Portland, Oregon (“Anarchists in Films”) during the 1980s. Ferrua’s festival spawned descendants in cities as far flung as Melbourne and Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. A longtime activist, as well as an expert on anarchism and the arts, the supremely generous Ferrua’s research on anarchism and cinema inspired a generation of researchers, critics, and militants.

For a younger generation born towards the end of the Cold War, punk music was as likely to be an entry point into anarchism as increasingly distant memories of the Spanish Civil War. During the first flowering of punk in the 1980s, I had a conversation with the long-time anarcho-syndicalist Sam Dolgoff, who worried that kids compelled to draw circled ‘As’ on the sides of building knew little about anarchist history or theory. While Sam’s misgivings were probably not totally misplaced, Russell Campbell’s analysis of William Keddell’s *The Maintenance of Silence*, a film inspired by young Neil Roberts’s decision to bomb the Wanganui Computer in New Zealand, provides tangible links between punk rebellion — that might well have taken an initially apolitical form — and solid political commitment. According to Campbell, Keddell’s film chronicles a pivotal moment in the history of New Zealand — the resistance of one individual to an increasingly repressive state apparatus.

To an even younger generation of emerging anarchists, the confrontations between anti-authoritarians and the police at the meeting of the Word Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999 constituted a life-changing, seminal historical moment. The young anarchist Andrew Hedden readily admits that the Seattle events had an enormous impact on his political development. Hedden’s extremely valuable survey of anarchist video producers recounts how, in the wake of Seattle, young anarchists, with access to digital video, have pioneered an “alternative form of journalism”. The great merit of Hedden’s survey is its international focus; affinities quickly arise between video activists in Lebanon, Palestine, Argentina, the Philippines, and the United States. All of these videographers are practicing what many anarchists now call “prefigurative politics” —essentially a newfangled formulation of the Industrial Workers of the World’s injunction that the “new society must be created within the shell of the old.”



Richard Modiano's *Cop Watch L.A.* offers a close examination of one of the collectives included in Hedden's survey. *Cop Watch L.A.* turns the culture of surveillance on its head by allowing citizens to capture police malfeasance with mobile phones and digital video — a tool that, according to Modiano, is not merely reformist but aspires to “create revolutionary alternatives to policing, prisons, and systems of domination, oppression, and exploitation.”

Despite the ongoing repression of the poor and weak unearthed by the Cop Watch activists, there is little doubt that, as we approach the second decade of the twenty-first century, the public's awareness of anarchism, as either a harbinger of hope or supposed doom, now equals the period of a hundred years ago when Emma Goldman became the symbol of unquenchable anarchist zeal. The brilliant Bosnian-American writer Aleksandar Hemon's recent novel, *The Lazarus Project*, ingeniously outlines parallels between the climate of fear (and intermittent hope) that prevailed during the early twentieth century and our own benighted era. *The Lazarus Project* interweaves the sad saga of the murder of Lazarus Averbuch, a poor Jewish pogrom survivor, by George Shippy, Chicago's rabidly racist chief of police, in 1908 and a Bosnian journalist's investigation of this incident in present-day Chicago. In an eloquent passage, Brik, the intrepid journalist, ponders similarities between 1908 and our post-9/11 era: “Politicians ranted against Emma Goldman, the anarchist leader, the Red Queen, the most dangerous woman in America, blamed her for the assassinations of European kings; patriotic preachers raved against the sinful perils of unbridled immigration, against the attacks on American freedom and Christianity. Editorials bemoaned the weak laws that allowed the foreign anarchist pestilence to breed parasitically on the American body politic. The war against anarchism was much like the current war on terror — funny how old habits never die”.

Hemon's Brik cites an early twentieth century editorial cartoon “depicting an enraged Statue of Liberty kicking a cage full of degenerate, dark-faced anarchists bloodthirstily clutching knives and bombs”. The images of anarchists circulating in contemporary media and popular culture are, for the most part, equally unenlightened. Reviewers describing Heath Ledger's impersonation of “The Joker,” the villain of Christopher Nolan's phenomenally successful

Batman movie *The Dark Knight* (and a character who periodically threatens to massacre scores of innocent civilians) frequently referred to him as an “anarchist.” Even a left-liberal film such as Stuart Townsend’s WTO docudrama, *Battle in Seattle*, sends decidedly mixed messages when it comes to anarchism: a creed which emerges as alternately admirable and slightly sinister. The confused tone of Townsend’s muddled film is attributable to the fact that an anarchist named Lou played by Michelle Rodriguez is depicted as upright and principled while the “Black Bloc” anarchists are condemned as apostles of violence. As anonymous critics of the film in a piece posted on the Internet (see “And What About Tomorrow?” at <http://anarchistnews.org/?q=node/5076>) observe, “(T)he media attempts to pigeonhole anarchists as ‘violent’ thugs was simply an effort to discredit the strength of anarchist organizing and the successes of direct action”.

As we approach what may well be a prolonged period of economic distress and political and social repression, it’s unquestionable that anarchism — the creed that liberals, conservatives, and Marxists once thought had been consigned to the dustbin of history — will continue to attract new adherents. Since mainstream filmmakers — from D.W. Griffith to the present — have proved adept in caricaturing and pillorying anarchists, there is little doubt that the anarchist community will fight back with more inventive stabs at constructive self-representation.



About the authors

Russell Campbell is Associate Professor of Film at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. He is the author of *Cinema Strikes Back: Radical Filmmaking in the United States, 1930-1942* and *Marked Women: Prostitutes and Prostitution in the Cinema*. As a documentary filmmaker, his work includes *Rebels in Retrospect* and *Sedition: The Suppression of Dissent in World War II New Zealand*.

Emeterio Diez is a Spanish historian specialising in Spanish cinema whose published work has appeared in *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, *Secuencias*, *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, *Cuadernos de la Academia* and *Historia* 16.

Pietro Ferrua is an anarchist who has been active in Italy (where he was the first anarchist conscientious objector for which he spent fifteen months in prison), Switzerland (where he founded the International Center of Research on Anarchism), France (where he organized a network for both French and Algerian deserters to avoid serving De Gaulle's war against Algeria independence), Brazil (where he was arrested and processed by the military dictatorship) and the United States (where he organized the First International Symposium on Anarchism and, consequently, a series of film festivals on the topic of anarchism). He holds degrees from Swiss and Brazilian Universities and a Ph.D from the University of Oregon. He is Professor Emeritus of Lewis and Clark College of Portland, Oregon and continues to be involved in anarchism related research, a topic to which he has dedicated a dozen essays.

Dan Georgakas is an editor of *Cineaste* and programmer for the annual Greek Film Festival in New York.

Armand Guerra (born **José Estivalis Calvo**), (1886-1939). Spanish filmmaker & anarchist. Fought fascism with a camera. As a 20-year old anarchist in France Guerra helps found the Cinema du Peuple film co-operative (two of his films have recently been found: *The Old Docker* and *La Commune*). Guerra was both a producer and actor in his films and used old Communards and anarchists in his films. In the 20s, Guerra worked in Berlin, then the capital of European cinema, and

for the U.F.A. studios in Babelsberg until he was expelled in 1932. In Spain, he began his first full-length film *Carne de fieras*, a few days before the military rebellion in July 1936, before heading to the front with his camera to capture the heroic efforts of the Spanish working class fighting Fascism. As a journalist, Guerra chronicled his experiences in writing, and his collected articles constitute an unique view on the Spanish conflict: *A travers la mitraille* (1938) (*Through the Grapeshot*). His life is celebrated in the film, *Armand Guerra: Requiem for an Anarchistic Scenario Writer* by Ezéquiél Fernandez and produced by Zangra productions.

Andrew Hedden lives in Seattle, WA. He has been involved in a number of anarchist projects over the years and writes regularly for Lucidscreening.com.

Eric Jarry is a French anarchist writer for *Le Monde Libertaire*

Andrew H. Lee is currently a librarian at New York University where he is also completing his doctoral dissertation on Gender and the Family in the Work of Federica Montseny.

Isabelle Marinone is researcher at Collegium de Lyon (Ecole Normale Supérieure Lettres et Sciences Humaines), teaches at the University Paris 3 — Sorbonne Nouvelle. Doctor of History and Esthetics of the cinema (University Paris 1 — Panthéon Sorbonne). Author of a thesis on "Anarchism and Cinema in France" (Paris 1 - 2004)

Richard Modiano lined up with the Industrial Workers of the World in 1975 and is currently a rank and file member based in Los Angeles, California.



THE CINEMA DU PEOPLE COOPERATIVE VENTURE

Eric Jarry

"I say, you know you should make a movie?"

"I have done, Les Misères de l'aiguille."

"Oh, what's that about then?"

"It's a short movie produced by a cooperative known as the 'Cinéma du Peuple'"

"Really? Never heard tell of it."

"Of course not! It's a group of libertarian artistes encouraged by Sébastien Faure and Jean Grave. Movies are made in the service of the workers' cause and they are screened in the Maisons du peuple and at trade union gatherings.."

"But what are you doing in among all those anarchists?"

"You forget that I am the daughter of Jacques Roques, the founder of L'Idéal social, the very first newspaper ever written entirely by women."

"Oh yes! Now I remember: sexual equality, votes for women, the whole suffragette thing!"

"Come now, Monsieur Navarre. The reason I sat for my certificate when I was fifteen was so that I could stand up to misogynists like you!"



Maximilien Luce poster for the coopérative du Cinéma du Peuple, Paris 1913

This imagined exchange between the actors Musidora and Navarre, lifted from the 1973 film *Musidora* was Jean-Christophe Averty's way of bringing up Musidora's introduction to the movies.

For some months in 1913 and 1914 the Cinéma du Peuple represented a novel propaganda weapon for libertarians, the



very first militant use of the new-born medium of film. Completely forgotten by the anarchists, including its founders, it is mentioned only by a few film historians such as Sadoul. Laurent Mandoni's article ("1913 in France") in the magazine *1895* and Tanguy Perron's piece in *Le Mouvement social* (No 172) helped revive the memory of it.

Initially anarchists were chary of the cinema. Hadn't the forces of law and order used it to identify rioters during labour disputes? One of the first people to have used it for projection purposes was the Marseilles anarchist Gustave Cauvin. His

Jean Grave anti-alcohol, birth control and anti-militarist campaigns were (1854 — 1839) closely monitored by the police. Here we have the evidence of Jean Calandri as reported bny Henry Poulaille in *Mon ami Calandri*:



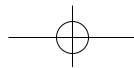
Jean Grave
(Police mugshot)

"My friend Gustave Cauvin was the official speaker and I his willing assistant in making the actual arrangements for his illustrated talks. It was my role to fetch the gear from the nearest suburban railay station to the lecture room, gear consisting of - in addition to the projector - a large bottle of acetylene gas for projecting the films because electricity had yet to take over from town gas, and then, I turned the crank handle to advance the slides as Cauvin gave his talk. We had practically toured Paris like that and later the same with Lyon."

By 1913, Paris had nearly 200 cinemas with a million spectators a year. The congress of the Revolutionary Anarchist-Communist Federation took place in the Maison des syndiqués at 18, Rue Cambronne, Paris on 15, 16 and 17 August 1913. A memo was drawn up on 18 August by the prefecture of police:

"At the conclusion of the anarchist-communist congress, the announcement was made that a committee was to be set up for the purpose of securing a film camera for anarchist propaganda purposes."

The Cinéma du peuple, a limited liability cooperative company with varying capital and personnel resources, was formally established in front of a notary on 28 October 1913. Article 6 of its foundation charter discloses its libertarian principles: the company would shun all electoral activity and propaganda; none of its members would be allowed to use its name or his office to seek elected office, on pain of expulsion. The company would strive to improve the intellectual levels of



the people. It would remain in ongoing like-minded communion with whatever sections of the proletariat that made their stand on the basis of class struggle and whose aim was to do away with wage slavery by means of an economic transformation of society.

The founders were nearly all libertarians: Sébastien Faure (founder of *Le Libertaire*), Jean Grave (administrator of *Les Temps nouveaux*), Pierre Martin (*Le Libertaire* editorial staff), André Girard (editor with *Les Temps nouveaux*), Charles-Ange Laisant, anarchist mathematician, Gustave Cauvin (already mentioned), Robert Guérard (revolutionary songwriter), Félix Chevalier (hairdresser), Jane Morand, Henriette Tilly, Emile Rousset, Paul Benoist, Louis Oustry (lawyer). Yves-Marie Bidamant (trade union activist on the railways) became its secretary.



Sébastien Faure
(1858 — 1942)

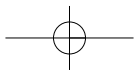
The work of the Cinéma du peuple was made known chiefly through the articles that its steering committee had published in *Le Libertaire*, *La Guerre Sociale*, *Les Temps nouveaux* and, above all, *La Bataille syndicaliste*, which was a daily newspaper. Here is one of the most interesting articles, a summing-up carried by *Le Libertaire* on 30 May 1914:

A Venture Worthy of Support

Some months ago, when the Cinéma du peuple announced its inception to the public, a single cry went up: 'Not another still-born venture!'

Actually, militants have become rather weary of such ventures that come to a wretched end. In fact, why back a venture that we know is doomed to failure? This, however, is one effort that appears to give the lie to the doom-sayers.

The Cinéma du peuple, founded some eight months ago, lives on! And, better yet, it means to grow! Launched into this world on 28 October 1913 with a capital of 1,000 francs, its general meeting on 17 May 1914 has just





*Les Temps
Nouveaux
Literary
Supplement*

increased its capital holding to 3,000 francs by issuing 600 shares at 50 francs a time. And do you know what the Cinéma du peuple has done with these modest beginnings and meagre resources?

For a start we have *Les Misères de l'aiguille*, a touching drama showing a woman grappling with life's difficulties, a woman who is rescued only thanks to solidarity from the workers. And then there is *La Commune du 18 au 28 March 1871*, a film screened with the success of which we all know at the Palais des Fêtes at the end of the month of March this year. Finally there is *Le Vieux docker* and *Victimes des exploiters*, two highly poignant drama bringing a

glimpse of the sadness of two workers' lives to the screen.

The Cinéma du peuple filmed Pressensé's funeral. Not one bourgeois cinema sent a cameraman to 'Shoot' the funeral rites of that great socialist and honest man.

Since its launch, the Cinéma du peuple has printed 895 metres of footage. It has correspondents in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, North America and Havana. This is a venture on its way to becoming international.

A number of screenplays are ready to be shot. *Francisco Ferrer!* The title will call to mind Ferrer's splendid life and the dark tragedy of Montjuich. The founder of Barcelona's Modern School will be glorified on the screen so that generations to come may remember the man shot by religious intolerance.

Biribi covers the Aernoult-Rousset affair which is to be reconstructed as a moving and accurate screen projection, a drama wherein the working folk can shudder at the sight of the tortures inflicted upon a man of their own class [...]

None of this can be achieved without money — at its 17 May gathering, the general meeting decided to issue a number of 5 franc 'loan bonds', repayable by means of a draw to be held after July 1915.

The steering committee which has a mandate to proceed with the printing of these films so that they can be offered to the public from the start of the autumn onwards, believes that its call will be heard and that the

‘loan bonds’ will be issuing non-stop to avant-gard groups and a number of personalities in sympathy with the educational endeavours of the Cinéma du peuple. It calls upon organisations and citizens to do whatever they can to take up these bonds themselves or have them taken up by persons within their orbit. It is a good propaganda move to ensure that the people’s cinema can carry on with its good work.

May we help the Cinéma du peuple to offer an antidote to the trashy cinemas which, in town and country alike, foster with their unwholesome productions a propaganda that stultifies the worker and peasant class.

The steering committee.”

The Cinéma du peuple’s premises at 67 Rue Pouchet in Paris’s 17th arrondissement was one of the great CGT halls known as the Maison des syndiqués. Built in 1909 by a range of trades bodies, its internal walls were covered in frescoes painted by Jules Granjouan and glorifying the proletariat. A screening room with a capacity for 600 seats had been built on the second floor.

Gustave Cauvin rented his own projection equipment to the Cinéma du peuple. As for the camera and cameramen, recourse was had to Bernard Natan’s Rapid Films company, based at 6, Rue Ordener, in the 18th arrondissement. In the late 1920s, Natan entered into an alliance with Pathé (which thereby became Pathé-Natan), but the 1929 crash created problems for this company which had subsidiaries in the USA. Gustave Cauvin was wrongly accused, was imprisoned and, being of Jewish extraction, was delivered up to the Nazis by the Pétainist administration and died shortly after that in a concentration camp.

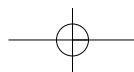
Natan’s camera operator had help from Henri Sirolle, secretary of the anarchist railwaymen, who trained in order to become the Cinéma du peuple’s cameraman.

Bidamant received masses of correspondence and became a fixture, paid 100 francs a month. An anonymous Italian sent 10,000 francs. Robert Guérard gave the royalties from his sons to the Cinéma du peuple. In March 1914, the renting out of the movies brought in 600 francs. A subsidiary of the Cinéma du peuple was opened in Amiens.

There were plans for a follow-up to the film on the



*Les Temps
Nouveaux*
1895-1914
(900 issues)
Edited by
Jean Grave





Commune but its release was postponed until the Cinéma du peuple had paid 500 francs to Natan, who had filmed the first part.

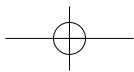
The cooperative's frantic efforts were stopped only by the First World War which intruded upon its plans. This was one plan, published in *La Bataille syndicaliste* in March 1914:

La Commune:
Armand Guerra
Cinéma du peuple
(1914)

“The Cinéma du peuple would shoot a film about the production of *La Bataille syndicaliste*, from start to finish: administration, editing, printing, etc. How many folk who know nothing of the production of a daily newspaper might be interested and what benefits might also accrue to *La Bataille syndicaliste* itself from such modern cinema propaganda! The making of such a film is expensive and we know that the Cinéma du peuple is not wealthy! Any more than *La Bataille syndicaliste* is. However, the idea has support and we shall come to an arrangement and set to work to make a reality of this interesting proposal.”

With regard to *Misères de l'aiguille* (some extracts from which would be released to the Cinémathèque française) Armand Guerra records a very interesting detail: among some very fine scenes, there is one location shot taken inside a Paris printworks with Cinéma du peuple's founders playing the roles. The venture was not without emotion. Armand Guerra relates the very first screening of his film *La Commune* at the Palais des Fêtes in the Rue Saint-Martin on 18 March 1914:

“The spacious hall was filled to overflowing. Upwards of 2,000 people attended the screening [...] The audience included a veritable legion of elderly fighters for the Commune who are and will remain revolutionaries unto death, in spite of their advanced years, for they carry within them still the imperishable whiff of fighting on the barricades. What touching figures they make these old Communards filling the seats in the front rows of the hall, all huddled together, with their white hair and their features hardened by the unforgiving creases of old age. Their names circulate by word of mouth through the huddled crowd of spectators and when the first round of applaud echoes through the hall, these heroes of the revolution express to us their gratitude, their eyes filled with tears, tears of consolation at seeing how, even today, the people of Paris remember those who fought for freedom and watched as countless numbers of their fellow fighters perished alongside them, mown down by

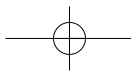


the bullets of the soldiery ... Might that same people that admires them have the capacity to imitate them?"

Among the films handed over to the Cinemathèque français, there is one that was a world first. Some brief, silent pictures shot during the CNT congress in Madrid in 1931. And in it we can pick out the faces of Rudolf Rocker, Augustin Souchy, Valeriano Orobón Fernández, Diego Abad de Santillán, Albert de Jong, Albert Jensen .. One not to be missed!

From *Le Monde libertaire* (Paris) 27 September 2001

Translated by **Paul Sharkey**



In association with **The Cunningham Amendment** and the **SNAFU** principle we are pleased and proud to announce the launch of

The Paramilitary Wing of AGE CONCERN

(not an outfit for cissies!)

But first an apology ...

It must be the duty of every generation to leave the world a better place, and in this sense we have failed. Rather than a revolutionary society we have left you with a rag-bag of cosmetic freedoms, intrusive surveillance, lots of shopping, smart missiles and 300 television channels. Sorry about that.

Many of us started off as dedicated materialists. We remember when there were single causes and single effects, single (class based) positions, single meanings and single explanations

We lived through the 60's when materialism met its negation. Positivism was on the way out - uncertainty on the way in. A few of us (amid the acid and the bands) had visions of alternative societies based upon love.

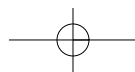
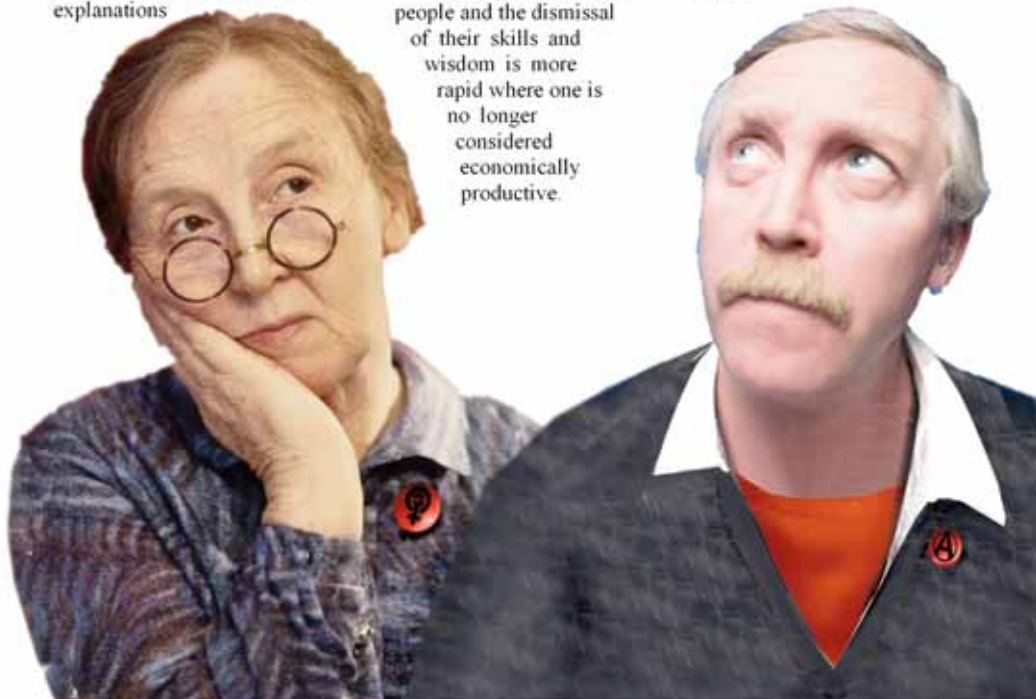
Yet more of us - in the tradition of Orwell, Bakunin and Goldman - witnessed the dangers of Marxism and all its conformities.

There is no retirement age for the Anarchist. Even in the nursing home we can refuse our milk.

The isolation of older people and the dismissal of their skills and wisdom is more rapid where one is no longer considered economically productive.

But we hold that it is a big no-no to assume that once 60 orbits have been flagged up one can make no further significant contributions.

You of the iPod generation, with your clubbing and reality TV, must not release the connection with aged Anarchists. Remember to wrap rugs round us in draughty squats. Respect the quietude of the chill-out room. Consider our use as human shields in confrontations. Watch us switch in and out of little old lady mode.





A NOTE ON THE UCCE COOPERATIVE

(Union de Cooperativas cinematográficas españolas)

Armand Guerra

In an interesting article “In Praise of Cooperation”, by V. Gómez de Enterría carried by N° 447 of *Popular Film* on 14 March last, the author does me the honour of mentioning my name, recalling a piece that I had had published in the same magazine a few years ago. I thank the erudite author for his good memory, especially as it shows me that there are still some who read and remember me, something of a rarity in our movie-making community here in Spain.

Now, in keeping with my chronic obsession with making jottings during my free time, I venture to offer this present article to the editors of *Popular Film* in the hope that, publishing offices being swamped and having no place for my prose, they may dispose of them by inserting them in some modest corner of the magazine.

For a start, my congratulations to my colleague V. Gómez de Enterría for his enthusiastic encouragement of the UCCE, the existence of which was news to me, given my long-established cinematic misanthropy.

The foundation of my own cooperative in Paris, to which my colleague alludes, and which went under the name of the Cinéma du Peuple (People’s Cinema) was anything but the handiwork of titans. Due to a freak of geography, the essence of it was that Paris is not on Spanish soil and thus Spaniards cannot meddle. Which is always a stroke of luck as far as ventures prospering is concerned.

In the wake of a success that I had scored — permit me to



Armand Guerra
(1886 — 1939)



discard all modesty! — as the sole Spanish actor, director and screenwriter active in Paris in 1913, with my movie *Un cri dans le jungle*, which I had scripted, directed and starred in, I was congratulated by Bidamant, the then secretary of the Union des Syndicats de France and he spoke to me about making movies on social themes as a means of countering the inane bourgeois nonsense that all the studios

Armand Guerra were serving up to the public. Seeing this as a chance of (1936) breathing fresh life into the movies — even then! — I put it to him that we should launch a Cooperative among the working class by offering shares at 25 francs apiece.

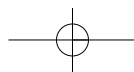
I shall skip the details of how its rules were organised and devised, lest this article become interminable. The interesting thing is that, two months after our conversation, I was installed in the Paris studios of Lux Film in the Boulevard Jourdan, shooting my first movie for the Cinéma du Peuple Cooperative, with a budget of 500,000 francs (raised through 20,000 shares at 25 francs apiece). I should add that the shareholders included workers and employers of the most disparate persuasions, in that the object of the organisation was to make artistic films rather than political ones. Many would-be subscribers missed out on shares, such was the take-up of the issue.

Our first movie — which I had the honour of launching ‘Musidora’ Musidora as protagonist — was entitled *Les misères de Jeanne Roques l’aiguille*. It was followed by *Le vieux docker* and then part (1889-1957) one of *La Commune* in which I directed a million people in



the Pré de Saint-Gervais, making it, for its day, the very first mass movie. My literary and historical advisor was the bona fide ex-Communard and great French writer Lucien Descaves.

All of the cooperative’s movies, especially *La Commune*, were warmly received by the public, regardless of outlook or status, making them doubly successful: artistically and commercially. The screenplay for part two of *La Commune* was complete when the First World War erupted and disaster struck the venture. It seems that the nationalist hordes burnt the negatives of our productions. And the outbreak of the war spelled the end of the Cinéma du Peuple



production cooperative which seemed fated to change the direction of French production methods. From that point on — I was very young and keen on my profession — I roved across nearly the whole of Europe, part of Asia Minor and Africa and worked in lots of countries. But never again did I get the chance to organise a cooperative like the one in Paris.

By 1925 I was working in Berlin on the first trial 'talkie' films which I had occasion to present in Valencia at the start of May 1926. I lasted twelve years in the German capital until Germany's protectionist laws regarding her film industry, strengthened further by the Hitler government, forced me back to Spain, in that in Germany, I as a foreigner had no right to work in the movie industry as I had been doing up to then.

And here I remain, in this lovely country of ours, in silent contemplation of Spanish output, much of it the handiwork of amateurs who are well-intentioned but bereft of the slightest glimmer of professionalism, even as my thoughts turn to bygone times — not that long ago — when my modest abilities found a guge outlet way up in the cooler areas of northern Europe.

I do not want to finish this article without wishing every success to the members of the Spanish Cooperative in the mommoth task upon which they have embarked.

Armand Guerra
Valencia, 22 March 1935

Armand Guerra, anarchist director

A chronology

by his daughter **Vicenta Estíbalis**

José María Estíbalis Calvo, better known as Armand Guerra, was born in Valencia on 4 January 1886. Of his family, nothing is known about his parentage or his roots, other than that he had a younger brother, Vicente. For a time they worked as a team, but prior to the civil war in Spain, Vicente left for the Americas, for Mexico and nothing more has been heard of him.

In a newspaper article my father states that his childhood was spent among priests and monks. He was an altar boy at the church of San Nicolas in Valencia before entering the





seminary. In those days he believed in all the mtsyeries of religion and in an omnipotent god. Later, sickened by the behaviour of the Church's representatives, he washed his hands of the whole lot and turned to publishing and the theatre and never again darkened the door of any church.

After which, there are lots of obscure periods. **1913:** in Paris he shot a number of silent movies such as *Les misères de l'aiguille*, with Musidora in the lead part; *Un cri dans le jungle*, *Le vieux docker* and *La Commune I*, funded by his creation, the Cinéma du Peuple cooperative. **1917:** Revolution in Russia. The Bolsheviks. I have no documentation covering a period of around two years. All I know is that he spoke

Barcelona Russian very well.

cinema **1919 or 1920 to 1923?:** Armand Guerra (as he himself wrote) (1937) was very young and keen on his profession. He roamed the whole of Europe, part of Asia Minor (shooting a documentary in Turkey) and North Africa, working in lots of different countries.

1920 or 1923 to 1932?: His German period. He was employed by UFA in its Berlin (Babelsberg) studios. He tried his hand at all sorts of film trades (titler, dubbing director, producer, cameraman, scriptwriter, actor). In 1925 he worked on the earliest 'talkie' ventures and presented some 'talkie' documentaries in Valencia in 1926. My father wrote of having



lived in Berlin for twelve years, albeit constantly to-ing and fro-ing to Spain. In 1932, Hitler's protectionist laws forced him to return to Madrid.

1932: He set up home with my mother, Isabel Anglada Sovelino (b. Madrid, 5 March 1902).

1934: I, his daughter Vicenta, was born on 21 March.

1932 — 1934: With his brother Vicente, Armand Guerra worked for the Cine Popular Español. They tried to open film studios in Valencia and Madrid but this fell through for financial reasons.

1936 — 16 July: He stated shooting *Carne de fieras* in Madrid. The fascist uprising had

begun. Being an anarchist, Guerra was with the CNT-FAI. He finished off the movie quickly (it was never screened) in order to participate in the revolution with his own weapons — the camera and reporter's pen.

18 July: Here begins *A través de la metralla*, in which Armand Guerra records his war journey, serialised in a Madrid newspaper before appearing in book form from the Talleres Guerri (?) in Valencia and distributed by Ibérica (?). A few copies still exist in Spain, although I do not possess one. All I have are photocopies from the newspapers of the day. According to the director of Valencia University Library, the Talleres belonged to the Valencia anarchists.

27 September: Set off with his crew to shoot a great movie recording the feats of the revolution. Later this was amended to the more modest *Estampas guerreras*, a film that has been lost.

1937: My father evacuated us and my mother and grandmother (our entire family) to Valencia where we spent some months, Madrid being subject to lots of air raids. On 19 November he went with us to Paris on a passport issued in Valencia and then returned to Valencia to resume his work.

Of his activities between November 1937 and February 1939, we know nothing. We believe that he was in Valencia and shuttling back and forth to France, but he never came to visit us, lest we be compromised. It was always his concern to keep his family safe. He arrived in Paris exhausted and sick and without papers and was recovering when he died suddenly of a stroke on 10 March 1939, aged 53. I was five years old.



Armand Guerra playing 'Lucas' in *Carne de Fieras* (Jul-Aug 1936)



Vicenta Estíbali

Translated by **Paul Sharkey**

CHUMBAWAMBA

IN 1941, THE EDITOR EDWARD DOWLING WROTE: "THE TWO GREATEST OBSTACLES TO DEMOCRACY IN THE UNITED STATES ARE, FIRST, THE WIDESPREAD DELUSION AMONG THE POOR THAT WE HAVE A DEMOCRACY, AND SECOND, THE CHRONIC TERROR AMONG THE RICH, LEST WE GET IT." WHAT HAS CHANGED? THE TERROR OF THE RICH IS GREATER THAN EVER, AND THE POOR HAVE PASSED ON THEIR DELUSION TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT WHEN GEORGE W BUSH FINALLY STEPS DOWN NEXT JANUARY, HIS NUMEROUS THREATS TO THE REST OF HUMANITY WILL DIMINISH.

THE FOREGONE NOMINATION OF BARACK OBAMA, WHICH, ACCORDING TO ONE BREATHLESS COMMENTATOR, "MARKS A TRULY EXCITING AND HISTORIC MOMENT IN US HISTORY", IS A PRODUCT OF THE NEW DELUSION. ACTUALLY, IT JUST SEEMS NEW. TRULY EXCITING AND HISTORIC MOMENTS HAVE BEEN FABRICATED AROUND US PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS FOR AS LONG AS I CAN RECALL, GENERATING WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS BULLSHIT ON A GRAND SCALE. RACE, GENDER, APPEARANCE, BODY LANGUAGE, RICTAL SPOUSES AND OFFSPRING, EVEN BURSTS OF TRAGIC GRANDEUR, ARE ALL SUBSUMED BY MARKETING AND "IMAGE-MAKING", NOW MAGNIFIED BY "VIRTUAL" TECHNOLOGY.

IT IS TIME THE WISHFUL-THINKERS GREW UP POLITICALLY AND DEBATED THE WORLD OF GREAT POWER AS IT IS, NOT AS THEY HOPE IT WILL BE. LIKE ALL SERIOUS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, PAST AND PRESENT, OBAMA IS A HAWK AND AN EXPANSIONIST. HE COMES FROM AN UNBROKEN DEMOCRATIC TRADITION, AS THE WAR-MAKING OF PRESIDENTS TRUMAN, KENNEDY, JOHNSON, CARTER AND CLINTON DEMONSTRATES. OBAMA'S DIFFERENCE MAY BE THAT HE FEELS AN EVEN GREATER NEED TO SHOW HOW TOUCH HE IS. HOWEVER MUCH THE COLOUR OF HIS SKIN DRAWS OUT BOTH RACISTS AND SUPPORTERS, IT IS OTHERWISE IRRELEVANT TO THE GREAT POWER GAME. THE "TRULY EXCITING AND HISTORIC MOMENT IN US HISTORY" WILL ONLY OCCUR WHEN THE GAME ITSELF IS CHALLENGED.

JOHN PILGER, NOVEMBER 2008

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EDUCATIONAL CINEMA A LIBERTARIAN INVENTION

Isabelle Marinone

From the 1880s onwards, long before the birth of cinema, French anarchists were asking themselves questions about art and its potential for promoting societal change. Initially it was through literature and then through the theatre that they tried to reach out with their ideas to the widest audience. Thus they were among the first “socialists” to set up People’s Theatres (Théâtres du Peuple) at the prompting of committed militants like Fernand Pelloutier (first secretary of the Bourses du Travail) or Jean Grave and Paul Delesalle from 1895 on. The anarchists’ first encounter with cinema came through Delesalle, a precision mechanic, who set up the Lumière brothers’ cinematograph in June 1895 and made improvements to the original film reel mechanism within the device. Such special contact between the militant and the moving image made no impact upon the libertarians of the time. It took another ten years, until 1908 in fact, before the anarchist press eventually turned their gaze in the direction of the cinema. Initially worried about the working conditions of the movie-makers, it later occurred to them that this recent invention might prove ‘useful and educational’ if directed at the people. Lamenting the commercial side of things, they



*A large potter:
Auguste
Delaherche”
(1934)*

wanted to turn movie-making into a playful learning device for the labouring classes. This quest was promoted by a handful of libertarian militants who included Gustave Cauvin, the inventor of Cinéma Éducateur (Educational Cinema) who had to contend with the skepticism from his comrades at the time.

The anarchists' negative view of cinema

Movie-making, a business launched by the Lumière brothers, was of interest to only a very few late nineteenth century French anarchists. Anarchists of the period, and especially labour militants, found little about the overwhelming majority of artistic productions to commend them. At the time of a lecture on 'Art and revolt' delivered in the Faubourg du Temple on 30 May 1896 under the aegis of L'Art Social, Fernand Pelloutier, one of the most fervent champions of the Bourse du Travail, set out where he stood on the people's leisure time and the cinema:

'Ground down by day by his exertions, brutalised by night by tainted alcohol and smutty shows, the mass has neither the time nor the open-mindedness required to reflect upon its lot; hence the indifference and cowardice with which the people who were behind 1848 and 1871 endure the worst outrages today. It rinses away the slap in the face with absinthe, the uncertainty of the future is forgotten at the singing cafe and the manliness of insurrection is exercised in the whore-house instead.'

When the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists did spare a thought for the content of the spectacles which the masses had long been flocking, their assessment was scarcely any better. True, the people and social movements were depicted on screen but most often through the prism of ridicule or tragedy. Trade union leaders were frequently depicted as alcoholics. In *Le Libéraire* of 27 May 1911, an anarchist journalist — Emile Guichard — had this at once bilious and sneering analysis to offer of what was still being called the Seventh Art:

'There can be nothing more repugnant than the scenes enacted before the eyes of the public. Patriotism, respect for the law, all of the bourgeois virtues are eulogised there ... Good people, your naivety knows no bounds ... But, look, can't you see that these showmen are making you into brutes? Look, here's a strike; see how they depict the workers in

revolt; the leader, a CGT delegate no doubt, was shown in the last scene speechifying in a bar; he stands the honest working men a round of drinks and gets them drunk; and the money that pays for the drinks he got from a rival employer from a foreigner, and here we have the poor boobs smashing up the “good guy’s” machines, smashing up everything in the establishment of the fellow who wants to see the workers happy. (...) Bully for you, good folk!

In addition, the use of cinema as a police resource did nothing to foster a rapprochement between this new artistic technology and the anarcho-syndicalist and anarchist movements. The use of photography for the purpose of identifying and classifying the Communards in 1871 was continued in the case of cinema. One landmark instance of this practice was the revolt by the vine-growers of the Aube in April 1911. The courts came down hard on them and, capitalising upon the presence of a 40,000-strong army of men, conscripted the cinema for service in its mopping-up operation. The director of the Pathé movie-hall in Epernay had the novel idea of filming the violent demonstrations. The bench and the police slowly reviewed the 600 metres of the movies *A Cavalry Charge*, *Insulting the Army* and *The Looting of the Gauthier Company*, shot during the events in question. The jerky movement of the film provided detailed pictures of those who rioted throughout 12 April. In the wake of this, an article appeared in *Le Libertaire*, pointing to this scurrilous use of cinema:

‘Since the newspaper vendors and businessmen of the cinema are merely tools of the police, let us be ruthless and let us sabotage both the folk who lead us by the nose (...) and the outfits from Pathé, Gaumont and the rest who are operating like narks these days.’

Une grande Manifestation
de
l'Office du Cinéma Educateur du Sud-Est

Dimanche 15 Décembre, à 9 h. 30 du matin
au **"MONDIAL-CINEMA"** 3, Rue Maréchal-Pétain - NICE

Sous le haut patronage de
M. Henry MOUCHET
Président des A.-R.
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Député-Républicain de Nice
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Inspecteur d'Académie
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M. JOUVE
Inspecteur primaire Adjoint
Président de la Ligue Française
de l'Enseignement (F) des A.-R.

avec le concours de
JEAN BENOIT-LEVY
Secrétaire du Comité Français de l'Institut International
du Cinéma Educatif de la S. D. N.

Réalisateur de plus de 300 films d'enseignement
et d'éducation
de **"LA MATERNELLE"** et de **"ITTO"**
Chefs d'arrondissement du Cinéma Français
(voir le programme aux pages ci-contre)

Participation aux frais : 3 francs
Nous recommandons spécialement les Maternelles grâce à leur publicité
permis à l'Office d'éditer cette intéressante plaquette et les recommander
à l'attention de nos amis.

LIGUE FRANÇAISE de l'ENSEIGNEMENT
18, rue de Valenciennes, à Paris

Office du Cinéma Educateur du Sud-Est
DIMANCHE 15 JANVIER 1936 à 9 h. 45 du matin au
Cinéma "Excelsior"
33, RUE PASTRELLE - NICE
(CINÉMA PATHE NÉGRE)
Sous le Patronage d'Honneur de Monsieur GAY, Ministre de l'Instruction Nationale
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Financier, réalisateur :
JEAN BENOIT-LÉVY
Auteur des films **"LA MATERNELLE"**, **"ITTO"**, **"BÉLISE"**, **"BÉLISE AURA"**
LA NOUVEAU CINÉMA, 100, rue du Centre Populaire de l'Association International 1931

Matériau :
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La HAUTE FRÉQUENCE MEDICALE
Professeur d'ARSONVAL
LA PIERRE QU'ON TISSE - LA BRETAGNE

et la remarquable film :
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Advert in *Revue
du cinéma
éducateur*
announcing
meetings and
conferences that
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1935.

When not deploring its use as a policing resource, the libertarians were ranting about the sordid commerciality and poor quality of the screenplays on offer from the cinema. This in part accounts for the omission of cinema schedules from the 'Entertainments' columns in anarchist newspapers and reviews between 1895 and 1908.

The moving image in the service of libertarian propaganda

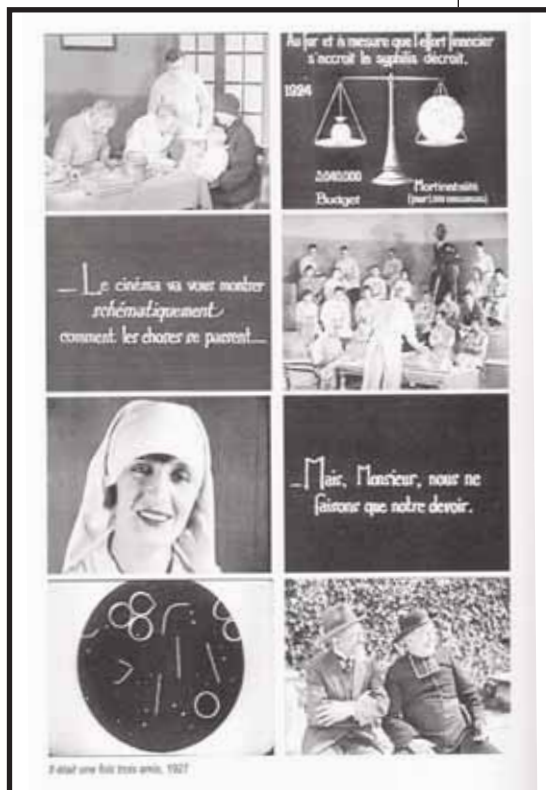
It was initially through the trade unions that anarchists came to reconsider their views on this technology. The libertarian press followed the activities of the Operators' Union in 1908 and of the Cinematography Staff Union which mounted impressive strikes in the Pathé cinemas in 1909. But, looking past the social issue of wages, the libertarians very quickly turned their attention to cinema as a medium and how it might be used for purposes other than entertainment. The issue of education by means of the moving image was raising its head. What they had initially taken for an instrument for the stultification of the workers now became the focus of all their educational ambitions. After some considered thought, they realised that cinema can educate the workers much faster than the book as images seep into the consciousness that much more easily. In Switzerland, a fiefdom of anarchists ever since the exiles who had lived there in the years following the Commune, an 'association for instruction by means of the image and cinematography' was launched in 1908. The venture prompted the French to do likewise. And shortly after that in *Le Libertaire* of 6 December 1908 we find the first mention made of screenings by anarchists. It came in the form of an advertisement for a 'causerie' (talk-in) in Marseilles dealing with aerostatics, a subject very much in fashion at the time; the talk would be illustrated by a number of films. Emphasis was laid on the fact that admission to the screenings was free of charge, the object being to enlighten as many people as possible. Lots of talks ('causeries') complete with screenings organised by militants for a working class, trade unionist audience in the People's Universities and Bourses du Travail soon followed. The films screened were Gaumont, Pathé or Eclair productions with commentary and criticism from a libertarian compère. This, for instance, was the case with Ferdinand Zecca's and Lucien Noguét's film *Les Victimes de l'alcoolisme* in 1911 or Albert Capellani's *Germinal* in 1913. There was criticism of the negative depiction of workers and strikers in the films and above all

the commentary concluded with a lengthy propagandistic rant on topics ranging from teetotalism, anti-militarism, strikes and neo-Malthusianism, complete with promotion of contraceptive devices.

It was from such talks that Gustave Cauvin emerged in 1910. He drew up and distributed a pamphlet designed for cooperatives, Bourses du Travail and trade unions; it bore the title *L'avenir cinématographique* (*The Cinematographic Future*). At the time, Cauvin was the most active advocate of propaganda by cinema. Linked to the Seine Union des syndicats, he was the first person to found a movie-making association, the Cinéma social association in 1911, which laid on screenings.

An extraordinary militant

Born on the outskirts of Marseilles in 1886, Gustave Cauvin grew up in a business family. He left his native Provence very early for different towns, like Lyon — where he arrived at the age of 17 before moving on to Paris where he worked as a hairdresser. Excused from military service due to nervous problems, Cauvin, who had a reputation for being quick-tempered, became embroiled in lots of punch-ups. He was known to the police even then. Returning to Marseilles some months later, he gave up his hairdressing trade and became an agent for Singer sewing machines. But he was very promptly accused by the company of embezzlement and dismissed on 18 January 1908. This dismal episode drove him into the arms of the trade unions. The police recorded his presence at several trade union and libertarian meetings, and at the time of a labour meeting in the Bourse du Travail on 13 June that year, a report by the Prefecture of the Bouches-du-Rhône noted that Cauvin was 'very vehement about the government which he refers to as a government of assassins'. At that meeting, he made an especial target of Clemenceau



*He was once
three friends
(1927)*

and he wound up the meeting with these words:

‘(...) The workers gathered in the Bourse du Travail invite the working class to organise in order to drive from power the “bandits who govern us”.’

And Cauvin accompanied his spoken words with printed words. Thus he had an article published in *L'Ouvrier syndiqué*, the official bulletin of the Bouches-du-Rhône union des chambres syndicales ouvrières, two days after that, on 15 June 1908, where we read:

‘(...) Government of cowards and assassins. Yet again the sinister slipper of the Place Beauvau has just been drenched with blood and tears. In the wake of the carnage in Narbonne and Nantes [...] here comes more, the carnage in Draveil Vigneux. For upwards of a month, the workers from the Vigneux quarries had been on strike. Their tenacity and their energy exasperated their ferocious employers and from then on, those craven employers spared no vile and base means in an attempt to get them to don the halter again.’

Cauvin denounced the pressures brought to bear upon workers by the employers. When strikes became overly irksome, the owners of the factories and firms concerned had no hesitation in calling in the army to force the workers back to work. Death was a frequent occurrence in this sort of dispute between 1908 and 1911. Given his stance, this militant was beginning to come to the attention of certain prefectures of police which added his name to the ‘Carnet B’ blacklist, listing him as an anti-militarist, a revolutionary and a propagandist.

Not only did he back the workers but he also backed the big anarchist causes such as the Francisco Ferrer affair in 1909. He took violent exception to articles by Guy de Cassagnac carried in the rightwing newspaper *L'autorité*; they attacked the libertarian educator. His support for Ferrer became all the more ardent because, even then, he was developing a taste for libertarian education to which he was to commit himself whole-heartedly a few years later through the cinema and his future career as a teacher. A member of the Social Defence Committee, Cauvin organised a rally in Marseilles on behalf of the founder of the Modern School. Particularly determined and not afraid of the police, he marched to the prefecture during that demonstration before climbing on to a windowsill to direct an impassioned speech at the assembled crowd.

From 1909 onwards his activism became more focused. He made it his business to set up an inter-union revolutionary anti-militarist committee in his home town. The activist had anti-militarist propaganda pamphlets distributed to the homes of conscripts.

‘(...) We are distributing anti-militarist pamphlets galore. *The ABC syndicaliste* and comrade Yvetot’s *New Soldier’s Handbook*, Hervé’s *Anti-patriotism*, Marle’s *The Patriotic Lie* and lots of others besides.’

Suspected by the police of being, like his brother Henri Cauvin, an individualist anarchist, he also took on the role of saboteur about the town. But his activities did not stop there. In the legislative elections of April-May 1910, he stood as a candidate for the Anti-parliamentary Committee. Then in 1912, by which point he was a correspondent for *La Guerre sociale*, his attention focused particularly upon Eugène Humbert’s birth control propaganda. From then on this erstwhile hairdresser organised talks in front of roomfuls of workers and explained how and why contraception constituted an essential factor in liberation. The police targeted him again, this time for trespass against decency after he handed out a pamphlet entitled *How to Avoid Pregnancy*, as well as selling certain “health goods”.

After that Cauvin was off giving talks from town to town, turning up in Lyon, in Brittany or in the Loire, his every movement recorded in the files of the local police. Wherever he went his speeches were scathing about those who ruled and the incumbent ministers. He made a particular target of the army and the three years of compulsory military service. A memorandum from the police inspector in Mohon on 18 June 1913 records:

‘(...) The speaker boasted that he was currently facing three indictments, one from the Dunkirk prosecutor’s office, and his verbal offences were as follows: he referred to M. Etienne, the minister of War, as a “shark from Morocco”, a “huckster from Morocco” and a “shady dealer”. He said that the War minister has shares in several large industrial firms supplying war materials to the army and that he places orders with himself (...) “We have a minister of War who is a thief”, he shouted. “Yes, a thief, and I am not afraid to shout it out loud. I defy the authorities to deny it.” ‘Let us educate the masses of the people by means of cinematography.’

As a delegate from the Seine Workers’ Teetotal Federation,

Cauvin and the anarchist Jean Marestan promoted meetings that recruited more and more support. He would punctuate his speeches with film screenings. This was a practice he had borrowed from other lecturers back in 1910, but he gave it a boost with the establishment in 1911 of his 'Cinéma social' association, in which he served as director, administrator, lecturer and operator. In his book *Résister* (1930) he explained his first encounter with cinema as a propaganda medium.

'(...) It was during a teetotalism talk at the Bourse du Travail in the Rue du Château d'eau in Paris. The matter under discussion was not very engaging. The speaker had managed to put two thirds of the audience to sleep. But all of a sudden the sound of a crank handle woke up the assemblage. The screen was lit up and began to stir. Eyes opened. The film literally grabbed the audience. No talk had ever succeeded that well.'

Convinced of the advantages offered by cinema, he travelled around with a projector and some reels, regaling the audience with strong images backing up his speeches. The strategy proved effective and the screenings were a roaring success, drawing huge numbers of people. And then, on a grand revolutionary propaganda tour, on 17 June 1913, Gustave Cauvin faced a packed house. The prefect of the Ardennes noted in a report to the Minister of the Interior that the lecture had attracted upwards of 120 female workers and 300 working men. The films were described thus:

'(...) Scenes depicting "social hell" were reproductions of workshop scenes from the big steel foundries and by contrast "the bourgeois paradise" was views of Nice and its surroundings (promenades, casinos ..) where, the speaker added, the bourgeois and capitalists fritter away the money so hard-earned by the proletariat. After that preamble, Cauvin launched into his talk. He pointed to the dangers of alcohol abuse and the devastating impact upon the working class (...) Putting the case for birth control, the speaker announced that the workers who do not have the means to raise a large family ought, in order to avoid deprivation and poverty, make do with one or two children, the better to feed them and provide them with the education they need. (...) The evening closed with a further series of movie screenings. *Les horreurs de la guerre* showed the Balkan



War (The artillery barrage and its results, Convoys of wounded, The fleeing inhabitants). *Les victimes de l'alcool* showed a once happy home now, under the impact of drink, with the father driven mad and locked up in a padded cell, the mother driven to suicide and taking her daughter with her, the son joining a gang of house-breakers, getting arrested and being thrown in prison. The final screenings dealt with the demonstration in the Pré-Saint Gervais and the German socialists' demonstration in Leipzig.'

Other films showed up in the schedules of the 'Grand cinéma social', such as the commercial productions *Little Moritz fait du sport*, *Saida bouleverse la force armée* or even *L'assommoir*. Thus did cinema become, for Cauvin, an essential tool for educating the people. Up until 1914, the films screened during talks were mostly movies shot by the big production companies. The movies, leading up to propaganda lectures also and primarily served to instruct workers in a follow-up to what the 'People's Universities' were doing.

'(...) Despite the paucity of films at the time and the meagerness of our means, we managed, through these screenings, to offer 'silent' movies about geography, natural history, health, sport, morality, adding our own commentary. Among the leading moral films we had one two-parter made by Pathé Frères in 1910, *Les victimes de l'alcool*. Those who followed our screenings remembered them and it was so much our custom to screen this film (on our many tours of France, Switzerland and indeed Canada) that due to our commentary it looked as if the characters were speaking for themselves.'

The Cinéma du Peuple

In 1913, Gustave Cauvin joined the 'Cinéma du Peuple', the very first cinema cooperative in France to produce the first militant films in the history of French cinema to target a worker audience. Initially helping out the association that had been launched by —among others— Yves-Marie Bidamant, Sébastien Faure, Charles-Ange Laisant and Jean Grave, by renting out his projection gear, Cauvin went on to become its assistant administrator. According to Eric Jarry, the project was launched at the congress of the Revolutionary Communist-Anarchist Federation congress held in the Maison des

Syndiqués at 18, Rue Cambronne in Paris on 15, 16 and 17 August 1913. Advertised and subsidised by the anarchist newspapers of the day, this organisation advocated a socially educational cinema accessible to all, as witnessed by this piece from *Le Libertaire* on 13 September 1913:

‘(...) What a wonderful propaganda tool cinema is! Our adversaries have caught on that the current situation is the product of relentless propaganda churned out by the cinemas. The militaristic spirit, the silly, poisonous nationalism come from that! It is high time to fight back! The poison cleverly distilled in the minds of the People must be countered immediately by an antidote! (...) The Bourses du Travail, the cooperatives, the study groups, the trade unions and still other groups must become our customers. Instead of turning to the film-making companies who offer them crude militaristic pap, the workers’ organisations will turn to us for their film rentals. In the certainty that our thoughts are theirs.’

The aim was to offer workers quality, morale-boosting, educational films. Tired of the Pathé, Gaumont or Eclair productions offering a contemptuous portrait of the world of work, members of the cooperative fought against these degrading images. To that end they followed the example of the Bussang ‘Théâtre du Peuple’ launched by Maurice Pottecher in 1895 and the Paris ‘Théâtre du Peuple’ set up in 1912 by the anarchists Emile Guichard and Henri Antoine. Like those experiments, the cooperative undertook to ‘raise the intellectual level (...) by offering views against war, against alcohol and against all social evils.’ This venture was then taken up by many of the People’s Universities. Seven films were to be produced between 1913 and 1914, mostly by the Spanish anarchist movie-maker Armand Guerra. Invoking the anarchists’ historical ‘memory’ and that of the workers thanks to film images, the cooperative offered an ‘educational’ form of cinema.

Memory and pedagogy as weapons of struggle

‘Memory’ and ‘pedagogy’ became the two principal ideas in libertarian cinema. Thus *Les Misères de l’aiguille* (released 18 January 1914), the only production shot by Raphaël Clamour, with Musidora cast in the leading role, was the first militant movie to deal with and denounce the exploitation of working women, especially those working for the fashion houses. It was part of a couple of productions by the organisation on

this subject, alongside *Victime des exploitateurs* shot by Armand Guerra (released on 28 March 1914), dealing with women working from home. Here, in both cases, the viewer follows the tragic story of heroines who are going to slide into social decline, exploited by their boss before being unfairly dismissed, and the lot of the women depicted is hard, being bound up with extreme poverty, the prostitution that awaits them or suicide. We are not dealing here with straightforward melodrama. The producers are bent on showing a very concrete reality which, in the mind of the cooperative, should not set the spectator to weeping but rather provoke a violent backlash against this state of affairs. The films could have stopped at registering the tragedy and offering, as was the wont in the usual melodramas of the day, a miraculous solution in the shape of marriage to some handsome, rich, decent man who rescues the penniless, lonely women from their social surroundings. Instead, the Cinéma du Peuple develops another more pugnacious and educational solution. Both in *Les Misères de l'aiguille* and in *Victime des exploitateurs*, the heroines seek comfort in trade unionism or in libertarian organisation which introduces them to a life of equality, solidarity, autonomy and shows them how to assert themselves as independent women and how to fight effectively alongside other workers against capitalist exploitation.

Other Cinéma du Peuple films adopted the same approach, eg. *Le vieux docker* (released 28 March 1914), a re-enactment of the story of Jules Durand; or *La Commune I: Du 18 mars au 28 mars 1871* (released 28 March 1914) the first film made about the Paris Commune. In these two instances the object was to recall recent history, highlighting the tragic side of these and exposing the disastrous effects of an unfair and anti-social government policy. The simple description of an episode from the history of the Paris Commune, viz. the mutiny by the 88th regiment of the line, the execution of Generals Thomas and Lecomte as well as Adolphe Thiers's flight to Versailles and the proclamation of the Paris Commune showed the viewer how powerful the organised people might be. This 'reconstitution-demonstration' offered a number of advantages, primarily that of reminding or teaching the working class audience about a fragment of its history and then explaining, thanks to certain descriptive sequences from the film how to organise for a fight against the

established government. In this militant libertarian movie-making the duty to remember went hand in hand with the need to understand and to explain, eventually inspiring the viewer to find a practical application for the fight depicted on the screen.

Other Cinéma du Peuple films were geared more towards more recent social struggles, like *Une visite à l'Orphelinat national des chemins de fer à Avesnes*, or indeed *L'hiver, plaisir des riches, souffrance des pauvres* (released 31 January 1914) a visual pamphlet on the living conditions of the most privileged and of the indigent. It could be regarded as a forerunner of Jean Vigo's *À propos de Nice* as it articulates the need to start in the here and now to build an anarchist society by doing away with the social inequalities depicted in the film.

The Cinéma du Peuple survived for two years before it abruptly broke off on account of the First World War, which put paid to it once and for all. It would subsequently provide the inspiration for other experiments such as the Groupe Octobre during the 1930s and, according to Laurent Mannoni, all of the 'future initiatives of the Popular Front' as well as lots of collectives during the 1970s (such as the Groupe Medvedkine, the Sochaux Collectif de cinéastes et travailleurs, the Unité Production Cinéma Bretagne, Sion/Iskra, etc.).

Cinéma Educateur

When the Cinéma du Peuple project ended and the First World War came along, Cauvin was declared unfit for service. This was his chance to press on with propaganda by means of the moving image by returning to one of his favourite themes, one that the cooperative had not tackled — the fight against alcohol that was the subject of his first book in 1913, *Antialcoolisme et Néo-Malthusianisme*. Touring France again and brandishing a 35 mm projector, he would regularly screen Gérard Bourgeois's *Les dangers de l'alcool*. His engagement with social issues, especially certain diseases such as TB, opened up other avenues to him. In 1916 he drafted a second work entitled *La Guerre et la lutte contre le fléau*. Cauvin gradually pulled out of adult education and turned to the education of children. After his first experience in 1917 — when, during a session of the chamber of deputies, he paraded a colony of poor children right through the Palais Bourbon — he was increasingly of the view that the



education of the young was crucial to everybody's progress. Since the war the workers had only rarely mobilised, the general trend being towards depression. Cauvin redoubled his efforts but audiences continued to shrink and screenings often ended in fisticuffs. Not one to lose heart, the activist carried on with his fight against drink and in 1919 published *Vers la délivrance*. It was on the occasion of his various talks that he bumped into the radical Edouard Herriot. Herriot seemed to show an interest in the anarchist and his new scheme for secular educational instruction of children through the cinema.

The Offices of Cinéma Educateur

Four years later, in 1921, Cauvin the agitator, now in cahoots with Herriot, decided to settle in Herriot's home town of Lyon. Espousing the same "rationalist" outlook as Cauvin and eager to erect a barrier against Catholic sponsorship, the radical politician was attracted to the idea and helped the libertarian get his project for Cinéma Educateur off the ground. Every Thursday, recreational sessions were laid on in every district of the city. Leaving 'memory' to one side in order to focus on the 'pedagogy' of libertarian struggle, Cauvin forged ahead with his propaganda. But as the 1920s proceeded he calmed down and allied himself with local city leaders. Cauvin was not yet turning his back on anarchism, but as time went on, he turned to an increasingly moderate socialism. Slowly Cinéma Educateur took shape and it appears to have enjoyed the support of the freemasons, as had Cinéma du Peuple before it.

'(...) To begin with, cinéma éducateur had only 15,000 francs awarded by Lyon city council to work with, plus the something in the order of ten thousand francs that I raised myself from a variety of contributors with whom I had been in touch ever since my anti-drink activities. While our budget in 1921 stood at only 15,000 francs, by 1929 this had risen to over 600,000 francs. We had almost 900 correspondents, upwards of 300 programmes (each made up of 10 to 12 reels) that were being sent out in all directions each week. At that time, we had up to 18 employees charged with making repairs, reissuing, transporting and delivering programmes and mounting propaganda sessions.'

In 1924, thanks to the senator from Isère and president of the 'Ligue d'enseignement' (Education League) Joseph

Brenier, the 'Cinéma Educateur Office' was set up. Cauvin clung to his original militant ideas and was eager to take on the Church and promote secularism, push the idea of cooperatives and pacifism and emancipation of the labouring classes. As his programmes for workers had been earlier, his programmes were made up of a variety of sorts of film, six to be precise: 'teaching films to illustrate teachers' lessons, films to supplement adult courses, films for agricultural lectures, training guidance films, technical education films and films on social hygiene.' So-called 'open air' films (documentaries) were used in geography lessons. In most cases full-length movies were bought the 'stock footage' available from commercial sources. Not until 1929 were cartoons especially destined for children introduced by the Musée pédagogique. The latter came up with footage such as *The Rhine, Tunis, France's Coast* and *The Art Foundry* or indeed *The Lathe-Operator*. Cauvin's Cinéma Educateur Offices supplied films to secular schools which ordered them, delving into the stocks held by the Musée and by the Paris City Filmothèque. The propagandist bemoaned the exorbitant costs of shooting short educational movies, but stuck it out.

'(...) Organising the Thursday shows was the Office's most important concern. It was also one of the most difficult for we had to find quite a large number of films and they had to be suitable for children. Now, let's remember that films for children could not include love stories, gunfire or violence.'

Regional activity expanded quite quickly, thanks to funding received from the departments. Up until 1931 Cinéma Educateur thrived. There were teaching staging educational sessions in their classes and recreational shows for the general population. Profits from the latter helped defray the costs of movie-making. After the advent of 'talkies' the expansion of the project slowed down. The new sound recording cinema gear was too expensive.

'(...) The earliest 'talkie' equipment was very pricy. The first westerns cost something like 500,000 francs (...) The main obstacle to the growth of 'talkie' cinéma éducateur was the fierce cost of 'talkie' equipment.'

The Office did manage gradually to replace the 'silents' with 'talkies' as far as the Thursday schedules were concerned. In 1938-1939, Cauvin recorded a total of 2,400 'silent' showings and 1,260 'talkies'. Right from the outset, the venture was not content just to supply programmes to school and post-school



ventures. It also organised propaganda tours. Gustave Cauvin's militant activity was alive and well. Every year, two or three outfits would tour the towns with successful films, organising screenings. Since the smaller towns did not have the wherewithal to buy their own projector, this system allowed them to have film screenings anyway. Any profits were returned in their entirety to the coffers of the local schools. In addition, Cauvin offered films to Spanish refugees at no cost.

While the Office was awash with initiatives, the Church had targeted Cinéma Educateur. Despite the best efforts of rightwing mayors and integrist clerics, the Office weathered the storm and in fact the secular structures grew to a considerable extent. Technical innovations boosted this — developments such as the introduction of the 'Pathé Baby'. Teachers strapped for money could use this mini-apparatus to illustrate their lessons. However, the 9.5 mm format was not entirely up to meeting the needs of post-school shows and in country towns the populace preferred to go and watch the superior projections to show in the parochial halls with their 35 mm films. Cauvin then switched to Pathé's proposed new 17.5 mm format (also known as 'Pathé Rural'). Far superior to the 9.5 mm format, this equipment had the advantage of being cheaper and less bulky than the 35 mm gear. Cauvin settled on the 16 mm form, which, as he saw it, remained best with the 35 mm:

'(...) Lots of compamnies printed films in 16 mm. There was quite a large number of these on the market, but rental charges were all too often still higher than we were paying for 35 mm. footage, the latter format being stand on the commercial market and there was plenty of footage available (...) In my view, the State should have made a considerable injection of funding into educational filming to ensure the success of the 16 mm format. But experience has shown us that the State's sacrifices on behalf of education have been negligible (...) We should not despair of 16 mm, which is the standard for classwork.'

In 1927, a 600 metre documentary about their educational project was produced by the Cinéma Educateur Office in Lyon. Then in 1931, three documentaries appeared, one of them dealing with the Fourvière disaster with the other two on *Les enfants de la montagne* and *La fête du sou des écoles*. Gustave Cauvin worked with collaborators like Louis Colin in

Nancy, Jacques Soleil in Clermont-Ferrand, René Pestre in Algiers and Eugène Reboul in Saint-Etienne, who also worked on the idea of Cinéma Educateur. Reboul, one of Cauvin's closest colleagues, published an instruction manual for all teachers — *Le cinéma scolaire et éducateur* — in 1926. In partnership with the Office he shot a number of shorts such as *Le 42ème congrès national de la ligue* (1926), *Les fêtes fédérales de gymnastiques du sud-est de la Loire* (1927), *Une colonie de vacances au château de Montbamir* (1928) or *Une capitale industrielle, Saint-Etienne* (1928).

Experiment rooted in anarchism

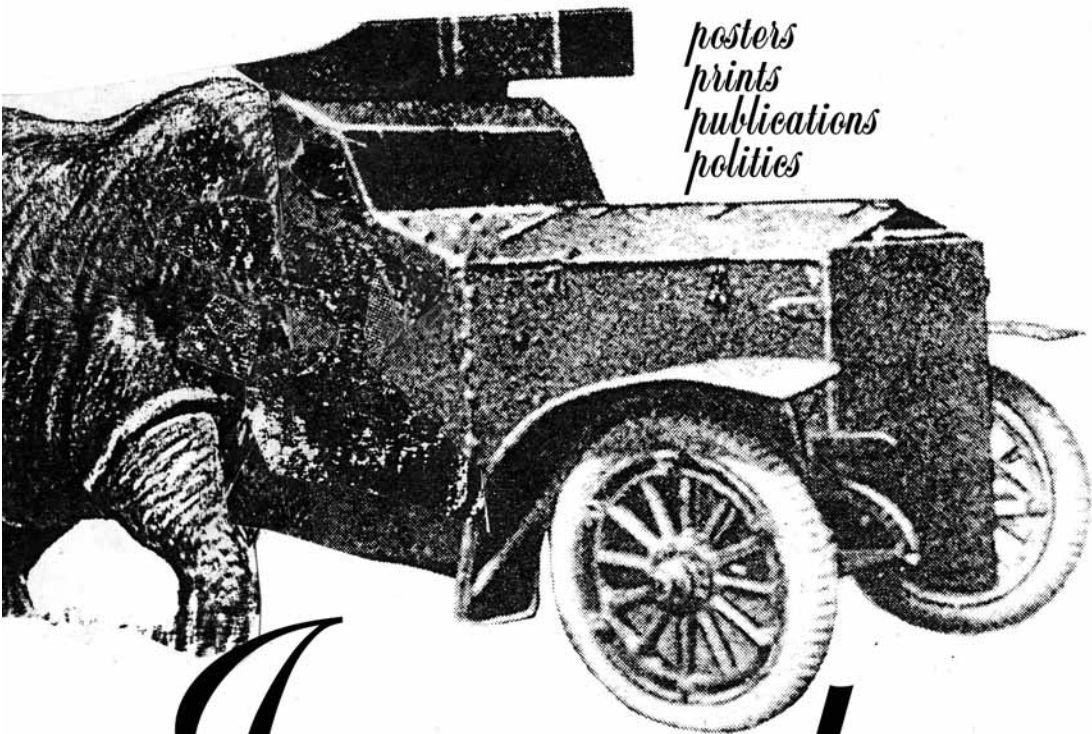
Cauvin, having come to be acknowledged by everybody (even by the leading politicians of the day) as the leader managed to marry his anarchist militant vigour and the cause of cinéma éducateur. He wrote around twenty works, most of them destined for use in education. The only thing was that the Vichy regime, during the war, dismantled the Offices, but they were to bounce back at the end of those dark times. The one-time anarchist was as energetic as he had ever been and was still fighting on behalf of the weakest and poorest. Charles Perrin tells us that:

‘(...) Even in the wake of the last war, when I met him in 1949 as a broken and ailing man, he was still carrying on the struggle. Sickened by the tolerance shown towards abusive parents, he had organised a neighbourhood commando made up of three or four burly types whom he would send out on ... illegal ... punitive expeditions from time to time. The guilty parties would be given a sound thrashing and warned that they would be finished off if there was any repetition. I had the honour of taking part in one such session one day.’

After having been drawn to socialism during the 1920s, the libertarian Cauvin finished up as a communist.

Cinéma Educateur was to prove a considerable influence on the educationist Célestin Freinet who was to take up Cauvin's ideas by producing his own films such as Yves Allégret's film *Prix et Profits* or *La Pomme de Terre en 1931-1932* (*Process and Profits* or *The Potato*) with his Coopérative de l'Enseignement Laïc (Secular Education Cooperative). Gustave Cauvin died on 1 November 1951, leaving behind a project which, to use his own words, could never have existed but for its anarchist roots.

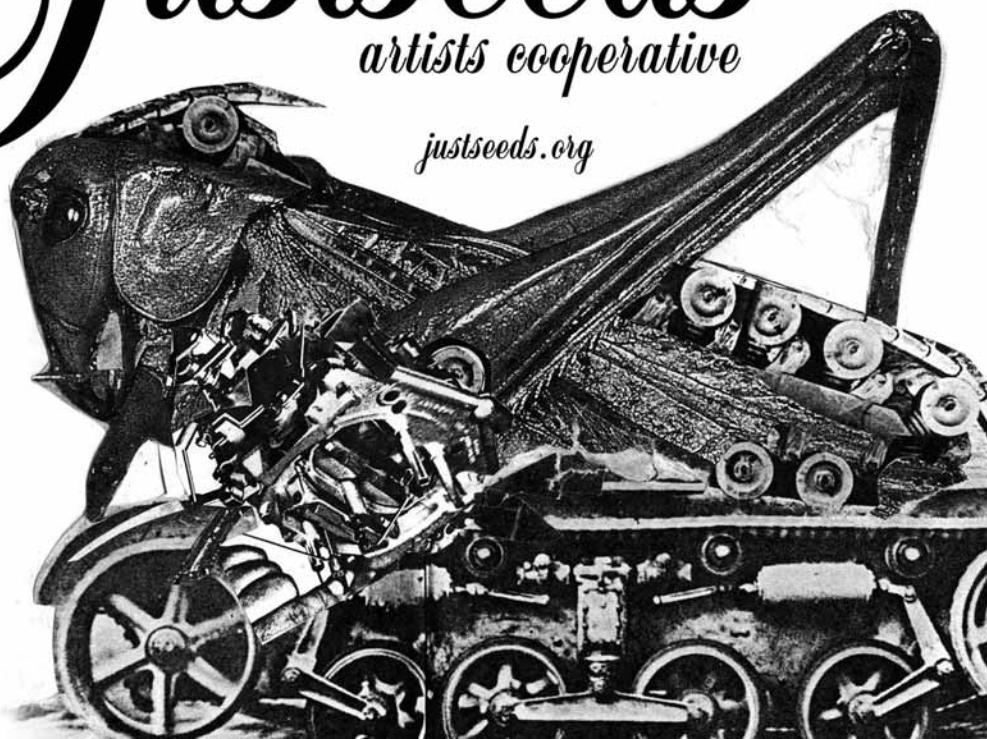
*posters
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politics*



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justseeds.org



NOTICES



uncle mike won't let we in the workshop becuz i
mited get my fingers in the wheels so i dun tvis miself
and I am proude of it i did, nT Thinx i cud do it mes
elf i hop U like it i am 10 yrs old an A quatar



TODAY?

Today I walked in my sleep
and lay awake all night. I am
busy and am working hard.
I am a model citizen. I moisten
my finger. Press the Enter tab.
Bring the details up on screen.

Move data here. Move data
there. But when I click on Save
and come to shut down at night
there is nothing there. There
is nothing there. *There is
nothing there.*

Nature is unequivocally beautiful
in all its aspects; where one en-
counters ugliness it is invariably
the work of people. (Stephen Fry)

EVERY JOKE IS A LITTLE REVOLUTION

(George Orwell)



"Listen mate. If your
argument depends on me
being afraid of you -
then you haven't got an
argument. Got it?"

Cogito cogito, ergo cogito sum:
I think I think, therefore I think I
am. (Ambrose Bierce)

Lonely revolutionary seeks same
for outings, direct action, theoreti-
cal discussions and rumpy pumpy.
GSOH. Box 69

the temptations
of obedience
and the
resistance
to authority

Mr Arnold

Foucault argued that the oppressed so completely adopt the values
and ideologies of their oppressors that they don't really need overt
policing because they will do to themselves what the oppressor cannot
always impose. Dutifully, the oppressed adapt to the dominant ideology
and never see any reason to question why they think and why they
act the way they do. Foucault paints a grim picture but it helps explain
why people come to take on the character of the institutions that
control them. Consider how professionals develop a certain demeanour,
gangs of youths that follow laid down patterns or how class
warriors see most things in either/or terms. But test out Foucault's
premise for yourself:

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HOW SOMETHING WORKS, TRY TO CHANGE IT**



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to receive regular prayers on your mobile. Press
5 for abortion (incurs additional charge). Press
6 for a DVD recording of your voice together
with the President. Please have your credit card
to hand. God Bless America.



Ahem!

To be a
Follower
in Politics
is to miss
the point.

Disciples are
People who
haven't got
the joke.



ANARCHIST CINEMA DURING THE SPANISH REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR

Emeterio Díez

Camilo José Cela University

(Translated by **Paul Sharkey**)

During the civil war, the libertarian movement launched a movie production arrangement — socialisation — that produced a new and alternative cinema. Differences between militants, marginalisation of those workers who were not CNT card-holders and the dearth of funds devoted to the sort of films that best approximated their ideals brought about failure. The Republican state itself declared itself against socialisation: the anarchist economic system was phased out prior to the end of the war.

By the 1930s, thanks to the freedoms introduced by the Second Republic, Spain witnessed a discernible growth in — and increasing intervention in cinema — by the political system. Not, of course, on a par with what had long been the practice elsewhere, in countries like Italy, Germany or France, but the government's interest in cinema increased and assumed a variety of manifestations at the time. For instance, the government looked into a policy of sponsoring movie production: it reduced certain taxes, gave its approval to a new Entertainments Policy Regulation, laid the legal ground work for screenings and distribution, set up mixed entertainment boards, encouraged the shooting and screening of films relating to its educational, agricultural and tourism policies and carried on using its embassies to harass foreign anti-Spanish films. For their part, the parties, trade unions and other associations set about churning out propaganda movies. We need only cast our minds back to the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV)'s *Euzkadi* (1933), the Communist Party's *Primero de mayo en Madrid* or *La obra revolucionaria de las hordas rojas de octubre del 34* (1936), produced by the Right in the approach to the last election campaign. [1] Similarly, parties and pressure groups managed



*Header: used in
films produced by
the CNT-FAI*



*Así
Venceremos:*
film still

to establish their own networks of film halls for the screening of movies in accordance with their ideology. The Catholics had upwards of eighty confessional outlets and the Left had a similar number of projectors set up in workers' *ateneos*, *casas del pueblo* and social centres, especially in Catalonia and Asturias.

Of course, a political movement as significant as anarchism (the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo [CNT] had some eight hundred thousand members in 1934) shared this growing interest in the cinema, especially during the civil war, when that entertainment medium played an even greater role. So the CNT's cinema policy in many areas around the country overrode the policy advocated by the Popular Front parties and indeed by the Republican state, thanks to the large



number of union members involved in entities linked to the production, distribution and screening of films. This hegemony, evident in the shooting of over a hundred anarchist films, gave rise to one of the most extraordinary epochs in Spanish history: the libertarian movement, employing what was described as socialisation of cinema,

introduced a novel way of producing, using and thinking about films. Likewise, the Confederation tried to break the hold of foreign firms (i.e. US firms), without however going so far as to take them over for fear of losing imports that were vital to the upkeep of its own socialised arrangements, which just goes to show that not even under anarchist revolution could Spain break free of her dependency on Hollywood.

Revolution of revolutions

As is common knowledge, the Uprising of 18 July [1936] destroyed the capitalist system of production by which the film industry had hitherto been governed. The end of the market economy came about in the midst of a swirl of revolutionary proposals. Each side, party, faction, region and indeed each city plumped for a different solution. Moreover, whereas in Barcelona and Madrid this revolutionary change affected the studios where films were shot and copied and also affected the laboratories, movie-halls or other sorts of movie-making firms, elsewhere the revolution only had an impact upon screening premises, that being the business with a presence throughout the length and breadth of the nation.

Specifically, the revolutionary change consisted of a few cases in which the entertainments union (or, where none existed, the workforce) took control of the means of



Cain!:
promotional
poster
(Espartacus
Films, 1938;
director,
Santiago
Otañón; script,
Javier Farias)

production and took charge of film companies, thereby imposing an arrangement known as socialisation (trade union control) or collectivisation (workers' control). This was the policy which anarchists promoted in most of the towns of Catalonia, Aragón and Levante. Elsewhere, it was a state agency that took over ownership of the means of production and took charge of the industry: this might mean a town council, a board, a home rule government, a ministry, etc. This arrangement was dubbed nationalisation and in certain circumstances it accepted private ownership of small and medium forms (albeit monitored by a workers' audit committee), thereby coming close to a socialist model of policy control. This was the option preferred by the socialists and Basque nationalists in Vizcaya and which the communists and socialists enforced in Asturias and, from 1937 on, in Madrid.

When an industry fell under the control of its workers organised along cooperative lines, there was a cooperative system. This was very much a minority option, albeit pushed by the UGT at all its congresses. Moreover, although by the end of the war the anarchists too were embracing cooperativism, it was not always clear if it meant the same thing to them as it did to the socialists or, rather, referred to trade union or sectional cooperativism, a further step along the road to socialisation in that the power of the state was being whittled down to a minimum.

Finally, when private ownership of the means of production endures, but the market is subject to the higher interests of the

Cain!: anti-clerical feature-length film which began filming in 1936 and didn't appear until 1938





State, what one has is a fascist mode of production. The nationalist camp advocated this option, which their enemies categorised as counter-revolutionary.

Plainly, in between these four possible arrangements (and especially the workers' propositions) there is room for many hybrid arrangements, often inconsistent with the ideas of those who plump for them. For instance, twelve of Lérida's movie halls were seized by the CNT, while a further eighteen fell under UGT control with each organisation running its own. In the city of Valencia, the CNT leaders, as well as the leaders of the UGT, determined in August 1936 that the entertainments sector should be taken over and socialised and to that end they set up a CNT-UGT Public Entertainments Executive Committee, a body on which, however, the two organisations were forever at odds with each other. Likewise, in Jaén it was the UGT entertainments workers who determined that the Iris Park and Teatro Cervantes movie halls should be taken into socialised ownership. Meanwhile, in Canella, in Olot and elsewhere where the CNT had a substantial presence of was in the majority, the entertainments sector was nationalised, which is to say, fell under the control of the town council.

And there were forms that were taken over by parties and associations and private or bourgeois firms were allowed to

Capitalist programme in a socialised system: Cine Teatro Goya, Barcelona, 8 July, 1938



*Aurora de
Esperanza: SIE
Films (1937)*

proceed with the making of certain films, with practically no tampering with the ownership arrangements in the distribution sector, in that it normally depended on foreign capital.

The presence of differing economic arrangements accounts for Spanish cinema output during the civil war

having to be categorised as follows:

1. Private cinema: a throwback to the old days, meaning a lingering manifestation of the capitalist system of production.
2. Government — or Republican state-financed cinema, which clung to the idea of cinema being in the service of government action, except that now tourist or agricultural movies were replaced by war and propaganda films.
3. Nationalist cinema, which is an alternative version of official cinema in that it was funded by the Catalan and Basque home rule governments.
4. Party political cinema (the parties being Marxist), which also existed prior to the war, but which now achieved unprecedented production figures thanks to Soviet aid and, above all, the growing clout of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) in Republican Spain, so much so that a portion of the government or official cinema output can be classified as marxist cinema.
5. Libertarian or socialised cinema, representing a complete break with the previous system of production.
6. Fascist cinema, also a complete novelty, in that the entire industry ends up in the service of the state, which sometimes makes its own productions and sometimes looks to private firms, since the latter are promised future commercial privileges (including public funding) in return for abiding by the official line, adhering to strict censorship and countenancing a crackdown on dissenting professionals.

Socialisation of the film industry

On the Republican side, where some forty-five thousand workers earned a livelihood from the Public Entertainments Industry, socialisation and collectivisation were the options

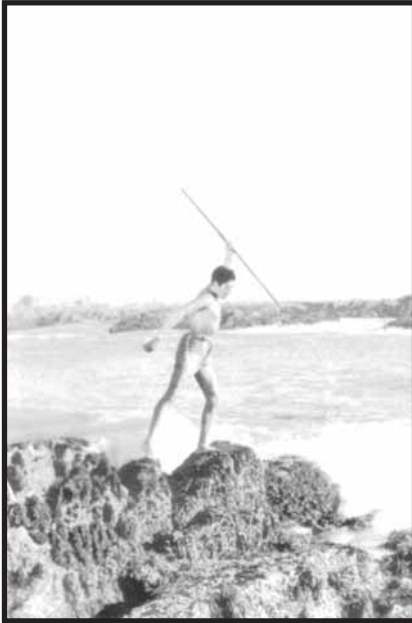


Aragón Front:
S.I.E. film team
at the Aragón
Front

enforced by anarchists in the geographical areas where they held sway. Essentially, socialisation was imposed in the larger urban areas where moviemaking flourished in many forms and, as a result, the CNT had organised the entertainments sector. Collectivisation, on the other hand, was implemented in locations where the entertainments industry was confined to one or movie-halls and thus where the size of the workforce was so small that they had to be organised under the auspices of the Amalgamated Trades Union. There was a third formula as well. It obtained in certain towns in Aragón. Where collectivisation was applied to a town's entire economy, so that the movie hall or movie halls were merely yet another community amenity, in some instances admission was free of charge. [2]

Among the many towns that lived through some of these revolutionary changes, we ought to cite Gerona [3], Hospitalet, Badalona, [4] Gavá, [5] Manresa, Valencia, Alcoy [6], Alcorisa, Binéfar, Torredelcampo or Málaga. [7]

Now, for reasons of space, in this article we shall concern ourselves only with socialisation and, more specifically, with socialisation in the two urban areas where that arrangement was most and best developed: Barcelona and Madrid. In Barcelona, the anarchist option was fully in place between 9 August 1936 and 1 May 1938. After the latter date, the Generalitat supplanted the anarchist management. In Madrid, socialisation was much more short-lived and also on a less industrial scale. As we have said, socialisation consisted of the



Eskimo(1933): and so on.

One of the films popular among anarchists of the time.

The employees justified the take-over of the firms with the argument that, in view of desertion or flight by the owners, they themselves had the most interest in keeping the film industry afloat, both in order to avoid loss of employment and to prevent other Republican factions unconnected with the industry from stepping forward and leaving them without a livelihood due to mismanagement.

Because, the question was being asked, did anybody believe that the owners were about to return and raise the cash to shoot a movie, improve a studio or open a new movie hall when they knew that, due to the Uprising, their economic system had been brought to its knees? The bosses reckoned that, as long as the movie industry survived, the important thing was not so much that it remained their property as that, as in other sectors of the economy unconnected with the movies, the financing arrangements or laws of supply and demand should survive the revolutionary upheaval. Which was, of course, not happening. Besides, the anarchists wondered how new cinema could be produced if the capital funding (the board of directors) still governed the industry. When an entrepreneur invests money in a movie, they insisted, it is in the hope of reaping even more money in return. To which end the ethical repercussions upon the public are not a consideration in his choice of screenplay. Secondly, he engages a team of professionals and makes it



clear that commercial success takes precedence over their artistic expression. The conclusion was that Capital investment nurtured the spectator's craving for pleasure, hedonism, vice, violence and a penchant for pornography — turning actresses into sexual commodities and directors into messengers of obsolete or outlandish mores such as the *zarzuela*, bullfighting, priests, gypsies, bandits, aping of Hollywood productions etc. In short, capital is poisonous, except, of course, when it is sourced from the government or, better yet, some workers' organisation.

Of course, there were those who looked upon socialisation as an act of theft pure and simple.

There were even a few Republican politicians so minded. Manuel Azaña, the president of the Republic, writes in his work *La velada de Benicarló*:

'The patrols that force entry into an apartment and make off with the furniture are cut from the same cloth as those who seize firms or commandeer theatres and cinemas or usurp the functions of the State.' [8]

A similar view was held by the communist and minister of Public Education, Jesús Hernández, foe both of the president and of the anarchists. In his broadside against the libertarian movement, *Negro y rojo: los anarquistas en la revolución española*, he writes as follows:

Pan nuestro de cada día (Our Daily Bread):
Solidaridad
Internacional
Antifascista

‘Barcelona fell victim to virtually total trade union expropriation. The CNT-FAI took over transport, business, theatres, cinemas, industry, hotels, the docks and the border. The Generalidad government was a ghost that, when it sought aid from the central government, met with disappointment from Giral or arrogance from Largo Caballero. In government offices the FAI made its requests at gunpoint. Such was Barcelona in the summer of 1936: prey to one big, unprecedented stick-up by an army of gunmen and adventurers ready to strip her of her very last button.’ [9]

The Generalitat in fact eventually recognised the seizures by passing a decree on 28 October 1936 wherein the anarchists are actually setting out why they regard their revolution as justified. One paragraph stated:

‘The amassing of wealth in the hands of an ever shrinking number of people was followed by the heaping of misery upon the working class and given that in order to salvage its privileges, that number will not shrink from triggering bloody warfare, victory for the people must be tantamount to the death of capitalism.’

Ángel Álvarez, one of the anarchist leaders of the entertainments sector in Madrid likewise rejected the views of Azaña and Hernández. In an article carried in the 23 September 1936 edition of *CNT*, he argued:

‘Let no one look upon this eventuality [the take-over of the film industry] as viciousness, rancour or urge to thief. Although the proletariat had grounds aplenty for such attitudes, it has, on foot of such wretchedness, full knowledge of its role in this point in history and a desire not to see anything or anyone stupidly leading to the collapse of an industry upon which so many workers depend for their livelihoods.

[...] the workers] picked up ‘off the ground’, as is commonly claimed, an industry that could no longer survive under the aegis of capitalism. There is neither thievery nor abuse involved in this as some cretins will insist on believing, but rather a perfect entitlement for everyone to earn a livelihood from his labours (the individual interest) and a lofty patriotic purpose [...] to boost and give a fillip to an industry

which, being Spanish, ought to be of and for everybody (collective interes)t'.

Plainly, on the basis of these plainly spelled out considerations, there is a basic case for proceeding with the taking in hand of a producer industry without our thereby being afflicted with silly, childish scruples. The current revolution which the Spanish proletariat is shaping through the unselfish and generous shedding of its blood [-...] affords the workers a sublime entitlement to reduce to utter nullity the entire economic fabric of a defunct capitalism and to salvage from the debris the novel system of collectivisation, the improvements in which will work to the advantage of raised living standards for all workers.'

Furthermore, we know that once the civil war ended, Francoism denied that there had ever been a film industry in Spain previously, or indeed a Spanish cinema — both of which would be achievements of its own. The fact is that the industry and Spanish cinema did predate 1939. What the Nationalists ushered in was a new system of production and, with it, a Spanish cinema that was different in terms of its films being committed to the regime's values. Of course, the anarchists also spoke of movie-making having been non-existent prior to 19 July 1936, or of its being characterised by industrial failure, unemployment, the absence of a native cinema and control and speculation by US companies. With their socialisation venture they were the ones to lay the groundwork for the creation of an authentic national cinema. Thus, the anarchist critic Carrasco de la Rubia, provides a nuanced account in 1937, by which time it was being difficult to deny the evidence:

'Come the army mutiny in this country leading on the war and triggering a revolution being prepared for a later date, there was no film-making industry in the proper sense.' [10]

Of course, in erasing or downplaying the entire history of earlier cinema and especially the startling growth in the film making industry since 1934, anarchists and fascists alike were justifying their own revolutionary or counter-revolutionary policies, when in actual fact the socialised system and later the fascist production system were erected upon an industrial infrastructure which, prior to the

Uprising, had made Spain the seventh most important market in the world in terms of movie halls and one of the twelve leading nations in terms of film production.



Socialisation of cinema in Barcelona

The body in Spain that initiated the revolutionary switch to a socialist production arrangement was the SUIEP — Sindicato Único de la Industria de Espectáculos Públicos also known as the SUEP (the One Big Union of the Public Entertainments Industry). This was but one sector of the

anarchist trade union, the CNT. The SUIEP popped up in 1930, intent, as the name suggests — One Big Union — upon uniting all entertainment workers (theatre, variety, music, cinema, etc.), for at the time, the switch to talkies had triggered serious frictions in the ranks of the workforce. Sound technology for instance required a redeployment of projection room workers, depriving work to the musicians that accompanied silent movies and posing a threat to the standard of living of theatre artists and technicians, in that these had to grapple with very heavy costs if they were to compete with the talkies. Similarly, as a result of the Zaragoza congress of 1936, a Liaison Committee was set up in Barcelona to unify or at any rate coordinate action by the various trade unions and entertainment branches that the CNT had around the

country. The SUIEP was the most heavyweight union of them all. By the beginning of 1936 it had no less than 1,500 members, of which 400 were drawn from the Film Industry Union set up the previous February to marshal the production workers.

The leading lights of the SUIEP were its chairman, Miguel Espinar Martínez, a one-time usher and box-office clerk at the Ramblas movie hall, and its general secretary Marcos Alcón. In actual fact, Marcos Alcón's roots were in the glass-making industry. He switched to entertainment in order to escape his employers in his original industry; his pugnaciousness had led to his being jailed

CINEMAS ECONOMIC COMMITTEE REVENUE (9 August 1936 to 31 December 1937)

Source	Pesetas
Box office receipts	29,673.636.4
Bar, kiosk and other earnings	147,612
Rental of advertising spaces	
(display windows and hoardings)	32,900.30
Automatic weighing machines	2.723.25
Films - newsreels (rental and sales)	21,030.60
Raw film (moneys from sale of)	2.625
Administration of social collections	5.709.75
Deposit payments	3.75
Various	15,702.1
TOTAL	29,905,739.4

Source: Labor del Comité Económico de Cinema

in *Mi Revista*, No 33, 30 January 1938

time and again, once on charges of having murdered an accomplice of the bosses' gunmen. In addition to that post, Marcos Alcón served on the CNT's National Council from 1931 to 1933: and in 1937 was appointed general secretary of all of the anarchist entertainment unions in Spain.

Such strength on the part of the SUIEP in the Catalan capital explains how, in response to the army Uprising, the entertainment sector became one of the first sectors in which the CNT carried out its longed-for social revolution. At first the eruption of revolution led to the shut-down and paralysis of the entire entertainment industry, in that a revolutionary general strike was declared on the say-so of the Antifascist Militias Committee. Those who were at work during those first few days were a team of anarchist film-makers who shot footage of Barcelona workers' resistance to the army coup in 19- 22 July 1936. I refer to the movie *Reportaje del movimiento revolucionario en Barcelona* (1936). It was directed by Mateo Santos — writer, journalist, film critic and later delegate of the Council of Aragón's Film Bureau. It was released through the Film Section of the CNT News and Propaganda Bureau, an organisation that was very soon coordinating with the SUIEP in order to produce further titles. [11]



In the days thereafter, the most astute or radical anarchist workers decided to switch from strike to seizure of the movie halls and theatres where they worked. There they held various meetings to determine their future. At the same time, dozens of workers and indeed entire organisations such as the actors' organisation of the orchestra leaders' organisation, joined the SUIEP.

On 26 July the Generalitat issued a decree establishing the Entertainment Commissariat of Catalonia. The intention was for this agency to regulate and monitor entertainment firms and thereby neutralise the revolutionary movement. On the same date, Josep Carner Ribalta was appointed commissar and, shortly after that, the Generalitat's Film Committee (also headed by him) was amalgamated with the commissariat.

The Cinemas Economic Committee

The Generalitat's legal provisions, however, were overruled by worker action. On 26 July the anarchist workers appointed a Technical Commission to institute a scheme for the

management of seized entertainment outlets, meaning virtually all of the premises in the city, given their hegemony in the sector. The SUEP chairman, Miguel Espinar, spearheaded this radical turnaround although the fact is that the guidelines behind the revolutionary scheme had been drawn up by the leading anarchist Juan García Oliver. For his part, Carner Ribalta was forced into exile in Paris in order to escape gunmen friendly to the SUEP who could not countenance his opposition to the revolutionary movement.

In fact, on 6 August 1936, the workers, gathered together, determined that the ownership and management of all the city's movie halls should come under their remit through a Cinemas Economic Committee answerable to the SUEP. This option for socialisation was implemented on Sunday 9 August and was ratified by the Generalitat of Catalonia on 12 August (see *Diario Oficial* of 18 August). The next to follow suit were the theatre workers who on 14 August socialised their sector. Shortly after that a Public Entertainments Central Committee was set up; it was broken down into three economic committees — Cinema, Theatre and Varieties, and Circus. In other words, some 112 cinemas (further ones were opened later), twelve theatres and between seven and ten variety theatres (depending on the date) came under workers' control. Each of these premises in turn was run by a workers' committee made up of representatives from each section or trade, and by a trade union delegate who was ultimately responsible for the functioning of the premises, as well as for monitoring the performance of the workers.

Unlike in Madrid, where all entertainment outlets under anarchist control came under the aegis of the union and were governed by a single budget, the presence in Barcelona of three such committees, and three such budgets (with others added later for handball facilities, dog-racing, etc.) shows that socialisation was implemented on the basis of activity.

This explains why the cinema employees looked out for their own, helping the Film Production Committee, and also were heedful of the Film Entertainment Industry Collectivised Industrial Group and its remit, but often turned a blind eye to the fate and needs of the theatre or varieties, unless required to do so by order of the top leadership. In other words, there was no entertainments' policy as such. There was an inability to rise above the divisions inherited from the previous economic arrangements, the sort of divisions that the

founding of an industry-wide union, the SUIEP in 1930 had been intended to supersede. This is a very significant fact if we are to understand subsequent developments, especially the intervention by the Generalitat.

The Cinemas Economic Committee turned privately owned movie theatres into the property of the work force and of the union branch to which they belonged. As for the running of these theatres, the committee was broken down into four departments: supplies, screening, box office and advertising. The Box Office department, for instance, deposited ticket earnings from all of the premises in a shared fund and the resultant profits were shared out around the workers, and investments made in partisan films. Thus, the capital that funded cinema amenities and the cinemas themselves helped create and sustain an anarcho-syndicalist Spanish cinema industry which at that point bore the CNT-FAI imprint and was produced by the SUEP. I have in mind the reports on the anarchist columns in Aragón, shot during the summer of 1936 with the cameras of Adrien Porchet and Pablo Wescheuk, reports such as *Aguiluchos de la FAI por tierras de Aragón* (reports Nos 1 and 2), *La toma de Sietamo* and *La batalla de Farlete*. The sound track to most of these movies came from the writer and journalist Jacinto Tornyho, one of the directors of the anarchist *Solidaridad Obrera* newspaper, author of the lyrics to the CNT anthem *A las barricadas* and the man in charge of the CNT-FAI Press and Propaganda Bureau. Similarly, the SUEP filmed the movie *Barcelona trabaja para el frente* (1936) on behalf of another anarchist institution, the Central Supplies Committee; Mateo Santos directed the film.

When it comes to assessing the Cinemas Economic Committee, we have access to its *Memoria*, a document that the Generalitat's decrees on collectivised enterprises required it to print and make public. However, the *Memoria* submitted by Miguel Espinar in November 1937 has to be treated very guardedly. Omitted from its pages are details — such as a precise breakdown of the receipts brought in at the box office — vital to any real assessment of how the city's cinemas were run. The dissatisfaction generated by this *Memoria* and the rumours of mismanagement or fraud (whether genuine or peddled by the communists in order to gain control of the cinemas) account for the committee's issuing, between December 1937 and January 1938 and under threat of a Generalitat take-over of the entertainments' sector, more

detailed figures in *Mi Revista*, complete with a breakdown of revenue; these however contradicted the details given in the *Memoria*, and also included a number of mistakes.

In order to afford the reader some insight into the implications of revolutionary change, the ‘post socialization’ figures provided by the Cinemas Economic Committee — against the accounts of those same premises prior to 18 July 1936, ie. when they were under capitalist rule—provide an idea of the extent of the transformation. The underlying differences between one economic set-up and the other boil down to this. For one thing, socialization spectacularly increased personnel costs, increasing wages costs as well as additional staffing costs. Thus the average wage grew for fifty pesetas a week to 125 pesetas (a 150 per cent increase) while upwards of 1,500 unemployed workers were taken on, so that the Cinemas Economic Committee had 3,000 workers on its books by October 1937. This accounts for staffing costs rising by 63 per cent when under the capitalist arrangement they stood at 14 per cent.

Secondly, socialization brought a reduced contribution to the costs of the State. Tax levels fell from 11 per cent of costs under capitalism to less than 9 per cent. In fact, according to the agreements worked out between the State, the Generalitat and the City Council, the committee was due to pay some four million pesetas a year, when it actually paid over some 700,000 pesetas over a 17 month period. It appears that the City Council was looking for 289,000 pesetas a month, but the Committee only coughed up 130,00, plus another 120,000 in State taxes. And that was from January 1937 onwards. Hence the figure in column three stands at 2 per cent.

Thirdly, socialization forced the property sector to cut its costs by half, whereas prior to this the rent and maintenance charges on premises were the second largest expense incurred by a movie hall. The saving plus other revenues were invested in upgrading premises, repairing air raid damage and in the construction of two new movie halls, the Durruti and the Ascaso.

Finally, socialization tried to counter the traditional domination of the movie industry by foreign distributors. Bear in mind that the SUIEP never ventured to socialize the distribution end of things, although it curtailed the rights of

the employers and their profit margins through workers' control committees which monitored the operation of each of the firms as commercial operations, hiring staff, etc. The fact of the matter is that workers on the distribution end of things were less radical than those involved in the screening end. They knew that they were the best paid workers in the film industry thanks to the outstanding profits generated by imported films and they realised that their pay rates were dependent upon the central firms in Hollywood, Great Britain and France keeping the trade with Spain going. Which explains why these staff remained loyal to the entrepreneurs and why in many instances the control committees existed in name only or were in cahoots with the bosses in order to keep the company safe.

In any event, the Cinemas Economic Committee's monopoly in Barcelona city completely transformed the contractual relations obtaining between the screening and the distribution sectors.

Indeed, on 11 August 1936, just two days after the movie halls were taken into socialised ownership, Miguel Espinar held a meeting with various members of the Spanish Chamber of Cinematography, an employer organisation representing the distributors. The anarchists may have had the movie halls under their control, but the Chamber had something rather more important — the movies for screening there. The SUIEP could of course socialise distribution, but that would prompt the foreign firms to stop sending their films to Spain. Furthermore, Espinar was well aware that the entire socialisation system was dependent upon the purchase of films abroad — Hollywood movies, essentially. Those were the sort of movies that the committee scheduled most frequently since, albeit that they were looked at askance in that they were the products of a capitalist mode of production, managers found that they were the best received by audiences and thus assured the workers making up the Cinemas Economic Committee of a good income. This paradox explains why there was no radical break between the programming prior to and after 19 July 1936. In actuality, the two main demands that Miguel Espinar made of the distributors and that they had to agree to were:

1. That they write off the monies due to them from the Sunday 9 August 1936 collection, which monies would pass to the committee.

2. That the charges for rental of already advertised films and of new titles leased while the abnormal political situation in Spain obtained should be slashed by 30 per cent. As a result, the revenue due to that sector fell substantially by 18 per cent — 21 per cent as compared with the previous period. (See Figure 2).

Within days of the meeting, committee representatives and representatives from the Chamber travelled to Paris for negotiations with the European agents of the major foreign companies. The goal was to set their minds at rest as to the future of their businesses in Spain and thereby keep foreign trade going, not so much through those stormy times (in that the films had already been imported) as in the future. But the fact that several entrepreneurs used the opportunity of the Paris trip to remain abroad and then make their way home, but to Nationalist-held territory, indicates that the distributors' cooperation was almost always a sham, that is, designed to safeguard their assets or their very lives.

The fact is that over the ensuing months the pressures for reductions in hiring fees (plus the dearth of foreign currency) led to a fall in the quality of schedules in that, following the upheavals of 1937-1938, the foreign distributors were loath to supply new films. The screening of old films or second-rate films, along with the impact of the war (air raids, black-out, rising living costs, etc.) led to an increasingly serious fall-off in admissions and a de facto bankruptcy of the socialised system.

The Film Production Committee

Although the workers' committee stripped the entrepreneurs of a few of their functions, the film production sector remained initially unchanged. For instance, the producer had the sole say in the choice of the director, cameraman, and the assistants to both, as well as the main players in the films due to be shot. The remainder of the technical and artistic personnel was appointed by the committee and naturally priority was given to anarchist affiliates, the aim being to ensure that members of other organisations or the unaffiliated would feel obliged to join the CNT union.

Now, since the producers merely completed production on the shoots that had been begun prior to 18 July 1936, film activity soon diminished, with a resultant growth in unemployment. This in turn prompted the Film Industry

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF BARCELONA CINEMAS IN 1935 AND IN 1936-1937

OUTLAY	COSTS	MONTHLY COSTS	UNDER SOCIALISATION
	UNDER CAPITALISM, 1935	UNDER SOCIALISATION	9 AUGUST 1936 - 31 DECEMBER 1937
Cinema staffing costs		1,257,524	17,018,552
Other fixed payments			164,576
Orchestra payments		99,616	
Conductors - concert performers		6,116	
Variety artists		34,944	
Impresarios		43,620	549,582
Committee personnel		4,392	
Sickness, old age and invalidity subsidies		20,000	120,000
Wages sub-total	14%	1,466,212 (6%)	17,156,558 (62%)
Film Hire	50%	400,000 (18%)	6,029,805 (21%)
Hire of premises		81,000	81,000
Repairs to premises		60,000	618,230
Projection room maintenance		50,000	403,711
Work on new premises		20,000	252,128
Minor outlay on premises			42,645
Payments to Western Union for equipment			20,000
Premises sub-total	19%	211,000 (8%)	1,417,714 (5%)
State taxes		88,000	
Generalitat taxes		80,000	
Municipal levies		45,000	
Taxation sub-total	14%	213,000 (9%)	683,397 (2%)
Royalties			180,503 (1%)
Press and advertising		16,000 (1%)	819,533 (3%)
Telephone charges		3,300	56,031
Water		6,500	50,977
Electricity		70,000	1,002,160
Office expenses			61,718
Insurance			4,024
Government levies			2,300
General running costs			341,061
Debts owed to former companies			52,524
Other expense			91,618
General outlay sub-total	3%	79,800 (3%)	1,662,413 (6%)
Total outlay	32,000,000	2,386,012	28,649,961
Outlay, films, premises and on the front			5,474
Advance to Cinemas Economic Committee			1,004,796
Advance to Music Halls Economic Committee			11,965
Advance for socialised film-making research			109,793
Cash in hand			123,750
Assets sub-total			1,255,778
Receipts	40,000,000		29,905,793

Sources: (for column 1) Annual balance sheet drawn up by Modesto Castañé (General Administration Archive, Cultural Section, Box 268, 26 July 1938; (for column 2) Miguel Espinar, Socialización del Espectáculo. Memoria del Comité Económico de Cines, November 1937, pp. 10 and 11; (for column 3) "Labor del Comité Económico de Cines" in *Mi Revista* No 33, 30 January 1938. For its part, the article "Espectáculos Públicos en Cataluña bajo la nueva legalidad republicana" (in *Mi Revista* No 54, 1 December 1938) offers a figure that seems, all in all, to be incorrect: I refer back to *Mi Revista*, No 33, wherein it is stated that the committee spent only 164,576 pesetas on "film hire", whereas Miguel Espinar cites a figure of 6,079, 805 pesetas. Meaning that there seems to have been a mistranscription of figures. It seems likely that the 164,576 pesetas figure actually refer to "Fixed payments" and the figure of 6,029, 805 to "Films". Likewise, in "Labor constructiva de la CNT" (in *Mi Revista*, No 25, 15 October 1937), Miguel Espinar refers to spending up to July 1937 as standing at 3,710,740 pesetas equivalent to a monthly outlay of 300,000 pesetas, or almost 20% of spending. It also seems odd that rents paid for premises should be running at 81, 000 pesetas per month, when the balance sheet shows the figure of 81,000 for the 1936-1937 period.



19 July, 1936:
19 July, 1936

Union (a section of the SUEP) to determine at a meeting on 15 October 1936 that the studios and laboratories in Barcelona should be taken into socialised ownership. Thus the production workers assumed control of their industry through a new workers' agency, the Film Production Committee, the leaders of which were: Juan Bernet, a one-time employee of

Warner Bros. distribution who became head of purchasing and distribution; Anselmo Sastre, an electrician with the Orpheu studios became studio boss; Francisco Alemany became head of technical and artistic personnel; and Manuel Sauto and Arturo Montes took charge of newsreels.

The Film Production Committee was partly funded by monies supplied by the Cinemas Economic Committee's chain of movie theatres: to the tune of 1,114,589 pesetas by December 1937.

According to Miguel Espinar, this money was handed over without strings attached, for the Committee was no bank and the object was to 'foster and shape ... and well nigh create an unmistakably Spanish, genuine Film Production'. [12] To this funding must be added the committee's own revenue plus funds secured through other CNT agencies, so that by June 1937 the Production Committee had had a turn-over in excess of three million pesetas.

In addition, in order to have a presence in all three sectors of the industry, the CNT also decided to establish a distributor so that anarchist output would have its own brand name. That brand name was SIE Films. The initials SIE stood for an organisation reshuffle within the SUEP, a change that involved the creation of further economic committees and a new name—the Sindicato de la Industria del Espectáculo (Entertainments Industry Union). The opening sequence of SIE Films showed three workmen forging metal on an anvil while three cameras filmed the scene. This image, reminiscent of Velázquez' *Vulcan's Forge* (1630) is a paean to manual toil, to film as an educator of minds and a tribute to one-time blacksmith and metalworker Buenaventura Durruti.

The Film Production Committee operated along the following lines. A Script Bureau produced the screenplays for

documentaries, war newseels and 'pilots'. At the same time, it scrutinised proposals reaching the organisation for full length commercial features or stock footage. A selection was made from the latter so that the Production Committee could determine which should then be filmed, whereupon a literary and technical plan would be drawn up for the successful proposals. In the next phase, the Production Committee chose the best qualified elements of the film crew: the director and his chief assistant, the cameraman and second cameraman, the cast and the person in charge of the sound-track. The artistic director was chosen on a competitive basis after presenting a draft stage design. The rest of the crew were nominated by the relevant trade union branch. Later, a working plan would be drafted at the chosen studio; the Orpheus studios were dubbed Studio No 1, and had a hundred-strong workforce, operating two shifts; Trilla-La Riva became Studio No 2, with a workforce of 50. Films were shot on the basis of a seven hour working day. The 'rushes' would be screened on the Production Committee premises and the progress of filming monitored on a day-by-day basis. Finally, with the shooting over and the film processed in the laboratories, SIE Films turned to the business of distribution. The object of all this was to create a work dynamic that would stand comparison with the American studio system in terms of technique and organisation, while being superior to the Soviet system in terms of the revolutionary content of movies.

In fact, between July 1936 and July 1937, the Barcelona anarchists managed to produce 46 films: 26 documentaries, three pilots, 12 propaganda films and fillers, plus another five films that never got past the planing stages. [13] Among these films, of course, there were war reports, now focusing upon the Aragón front, the defence of Madrid and air raids in the rearguard. For instance, the five report series *Madrid, tumba del fascismo* (1936-1937) concentrated on anarchists' role in the capital's defence. The fighting in Aragón was covered by *Bajo el signo libertario* (1936), *La conquista de Carrascal de Chimillas* (1936), *Siétamo* (1936), *El bombardeo de Apiés*



Ideological messages:
Castilla se liberta (1937):
bottom —
Momentos de España (1937):
'Managing a grenade launcher')



(1936), *Aragón trabaja y lucha* (1936), *La columna de hierro (hacia Teruel)* (1937), *El cerco de Huesca* (1937), *División heroica (En el frente de Huesca)* (1937), and *La silla vacía* (1937). For its part, the film *El entierro de Durruti* (1936) was a tribute to that anarchist leader. *Solidaridad del pueblo con las víctimas del fascismo* (1936) covered a mass demonstration in Valencia. *¡Ayuda a Madrid!* (1936) showed the capital being supplied with provisions. *¡Criminales! (Bombardeo de Barcelona)* (1937) dealt with the naval bombardment suffered by the Catalan capital on 19 February that year. *El acero libertario* (1937) filmed the production of arms by the CNT. And, finally, *Manifestación magna pro-Ejército Popular* (1937) covered a rally held in Barcelona in support of the restructured Army. All of these reports were shot by, among others, Ángel García Verches, Miguel Mutiño, Adrien Porchet, Pablo Wescheuk, José Gaspar, Sebastián Perera, Juan Pallejá, Pablo Ripoll, Ramón de Baños and Félix Marquet, the latter being outstanding for his prolific filming. As to the authors of the commentaries, we ought to remember the journalist and cartoonist Ángel Lescarbourua (aka Les), Ramón Oliveras and the actor and theatre director Carlos Martínez.

Of course, the great novelty was that, in addition to the editorial line of these reports, which predated the Production Committee, there were other fresh editorial policies designed to boost recruitment efforts and at the same time consolidate jobs, entertain the public and, in short, create an industry. For a start, SIE Films opened up by producing propaganda pictures. Thereby giving rise to a series of shorts designed to stir the conscience of the public with regard to certain political and social matters. Contrary to what was the case with the newsreels, here there was a pre-written script, a fictionalised treatment of the action, planned camera angles, participation by actors; they were filmed in studio and were altogether more elaborately made. Which is why the responsibility for the film was entrusted to a director. In fact, films of this type had been shot before under the SUEP-CNT imprint. For instance, take the film *El último minuto* (1936), written and directed by sound technician Bosch Ferrán. This film was an appeal to the populace to fight on the front and in the rearguard and to prevent any reversion to the pre-19 July 1936 situation which was depicted as a situation of unemployment, poverty and exploitation. Similarly, some of the films described by the anarchists as reportage were midway between documentary and propaganda, in terms

either of their style or reconstructions. For instance, *Bajo el signo libertario* (1936), with its movie within a movie, or indeed 1937's *La silla vacía*. Actually, those titles that SIE Films regarded as propaganda documentaries were: *Prostitución* (1936), a diatribe against white slavery; *El Frente y la Retaguardia* (1937), on the two-pronged (military and revolutionary) fight being waged by anarchists; *En la brecha* (1937), a day in the life of a petty union leader; *Remember* (1937), an account of working class life from Tragic Week through to 19 July 1936; *Y tu qué haces?* (1937), a denunciation of young people who would not sign up for front line service; and *1936* (1937), a film that has gone missing and about the contents of which we know nothing.

Secondly, SIE Films managed to keep film studios ticking over by means of a series of films that we might describe as being of the industrial variety. On the one hand we have second features or half-length fictional features meant to accompany a commercial full length feature. Examples are *La última* (1937), a broadside against drink, *¡Nosotros somos así!* (1937), a musical in which a gang of kids manages to save the life of one of their fathers who stands accused of being a Nationalist spy, *Paquete. El fotógrafo público No 1* (1937), one of the first comic films by Paco Martínez Soria; and *Como fieras* (1937), another broadside against drink.

On the other hand, SIE Films produced pilot films or full length fictional movies that did constitute entertainment a form of entertainment that might be considered a genuine alternative to bourgeois movies. I have in mind the films *Aurora de esperanza* (1937) on the dawning consciousness of a working man and his involvement in the revolutionary movement; or *Barrios Bajos* (1937) an expose of Barcelona's lumpenproletariat; and *Liberación* (1937), a love story between a blind rebel and a prostitute. The director of the latter, Amichatis (aka Josep Amich y Bert) said of the new production arrangements:

'Under the SIE, Spanish cinema is no longer a hotchpotch of nonsensical stereotypes. Cinema has now left episcopal indulgences behind. Cinema, a people's art, has passed into the people's hands.' [14]

Of course, the SIE carried on shooting commissions from other CNT unions, just as the SUEP before it had done with *Barcelona trabaja para el frente*. Even so, commissions were few since the rest of the CNT's unions and organisations



Barcelona trabaja para el frente (1936)

reckoned that it was up to the SIE to fund and film their movies, instead of their using their own funds to help boost output, especially of propaganda films, which found it hard to recoup their costs through ticket sales. This lack of involvement in movie-making on the part of the rest of the libertarian movement was to prove another of the root causes of

the later set-backs to anarchist cinema.

Actually, among the films shot at this time on behalf of other CNT organisations, we might cite the 'short' *Madera* (1937), funded by the Propaganda Commission of the Builders', Woodworkers' and Decorators' Union. This was a documentary depicting the processing and harvesting of wood from a forest setting through to its transformation into furniture, objets d'art or other industrial articles. Along the same lines there was another singular project, *Venciste Monatkof!* (1937), not a movie but a theatre piece incorporating different movie sequences shot by SIE Films. This anti-communist work was chosen by the CNT leadership to mark 19 July 1937 and the first anniversary of the anarchist revolution. Its director, Guillermo Busquets, emulated the German director Erwin Piscator's theatrical productions. Images and representations blended at three points; at the ending of the prologue (a swift montage of image from the Russian revolution), in the opening scene of act one (slogans from the Russian revolution combined with a queue of folk outside a bakery) and scene four of act two (Monatkof's dream, in which the devil puts in an appearance). [15]

The communist onslaught

Obviously, the process whereby film screening and production was socialised led to a spectacular growth in SIE membership. Performers, technicians or Barcelona workers knew that CNT membership was required if they were going to find work. By August 1937, for instance, the entertainments union in Catalonia boasted more than 23 local unions, 26 branches and 13,360 members, of which some 11,000 belonged to the Barcelona SIE. Meaning that the CNT entertainments' unions controlled 75 per cent of the towns of



Catalonia and 80-85 per cent of the workers. What is more, the membership that joined after 19 July 1936 was so great that lots of problems arose as a result of their lack of grounding and inadequate grasp of the ideological. Especially those of them who were catapulted into positions of leadership.

The foes of socialisation of the film industry (the PSUC, the UGT, the Generalitat and the central government) seized upon the shortcomings of anarchist management, its parochialism, its 'foolish or bewildered' leaders and their internal differences in order to call its system of production into question. Of course, this attitude was not unconnected with the events of May 1937 when the CNT-FAI and POUM came into armed conflict with the PSUC and UGT on the streets of Barcelona.

They even brought their differences into the movie theatre, for this atmosphere of friction found an outlet in a series of anarchist films targeting certain Popular Front parties and organisations ... to wit: *Manifiesto de la CNT-FAI y Juventudes Libertarias* (1937), *Congreso de activistas internacionales* (1937) and *Nuestro vertice* (1937). [16]

In fact, the communists hatched a scheme to wrest power in the entertainments industry away from the CNT, just as they had already done in Madrid. Their strategy was to insist that all firms be municipalised, that is, brought under the control of town councils, since the latter were already in their hands or at any rate they had some representation on them. Besides, they said, the SIE was in breach of the legislation on collectivisations passed by the Generalitat between October and November 1936. That legislation required that each industry be marshalled under a single body, so that there were grounds for interpreting this as requiring the elimination of the various economic committees and workers' councils presiding over cinema or indeed a coalescence of firms engaged in the same activity, regardless of their trade union affiliation. The fact was that the Cinemas Economic Committee rejected municipalisation and, as best it could, ignored or put off implementation of the legislation on collectivisations. In its view, the municipalisation for which the PSUC was calling would be tantamount to handing the entertainment sector over to the politicians, a segment of society that it regarded as every bit as unbearable and dangerous as the bourgeois, the priest or the

military. The SIE spoke out against this very possibility in the first issue of its review, *Espectáculo*:

‘It is common knowledge that usual blood-suckers of Politics, cashing in on the high-mindedness and decency of the men of the Confederation, are bent on wresting from us everything that we achieved in the fight against the fascism embodied in the bullying of Capitalism and the State.

In order to lay hands on what we have achieved, they aim to municipalise Entertainments. We have to take a stand against this sordid ambition that would spell poverty for 60 per cent of the workers in our trade, and we must come away victorious.’ [17]

Towards a federation of entertainments workers

This offensive by the communists and the Republican State coincided with heavy pressure from the CNT national committee designed to get the entertainment workers to abide by the guidelines laid down by the March 1937 Extraordinary Congress on federal union structures, as well as the watchwords of the 1 June 1937 National Plenum. Which is to say that the top anarchist leaders were insisting upon a nationwide amalgamation of the various local entertainment unions, a notion which, as mentioned already, had surfaced at the Zaragoza Congress, only to be interrupted by the war. At that point, the establishment of a federation was designed to improve the functioning of the trade union by bestowing upon it ‘an overall rhythm and harmonious, uniform purpose that previously it had not displayed.’ [18] As well as bringing the benefits of the synergy of an organisation on a larger scale.

In Valencia on 9 July 1937, the anarchist entertainments unions and branches banded together into one Public Entertainments Industry National Federation of Spain (FNIEPE), led by Marcos Alcón (national secretary), Manuel Lara (external secretary), Jesús Varona (bookkeeper and recording secretary), Evaristo Rodríguez (treasurer), Liberto Callejas (propaganda delegate), Manuel Rivas and Evaristo Navarro (committee members). In organisational terms, the FNIEPE was divided up into six committees: Cinemas, Theatres, Varieties and Circuses, Parks and Attractions, Handball and Dog-racing. Geographically, it was broken up into regional, provincial and local unions. The largest of these



were the Catalan Regional Public Entertainments Industry Federation, the Centre Region's Public Entertainments Industry Federation and the Levante Regional Public Entertainments Industry Federation. Similarly, it was determined that power within each union should be vested in a Steering Council which oversaw all the functions and committees, whether these related to branch, funding or theatre. This ensured greater unity of action, or - and it amounts to the same thing — a lid was kept on selfish particularism and differences that cropped up between the various trades, forms of entertainment and different categories of premises.

As regards the strategy to be adopted, the FNIEPE set the wheels in motion towards coordinating the entire film industry through a National Production Company, a National Distributor and a National Supplies Committee. The 15 August edition of *Espectáculos* stated:

‘Thus our obligations in the rearguard must be none other than to look after the well-being of all fighting on the fronts until such time as they return. No one can be unaware that in this Cinema and the Theatre play a leading role, investing the masses with selfless ideals through their representations of literature. To date, this was a tool for the capitalist class to wield according to its whim in order to castrate the working class’s feelings and cravings for betterment, but that too is doomed to join the pantheon of the Forgotten, like everything else that places a hurdle in the way of our uphill march towards a better future. The Entertainments Industry National Federation has a duty to honour this great pledge by marshalling the initiatives of the Unions, reconciling them and extending the hand of friendship to the entire Industry, turning them into reality and not allowing their activities to be relegated to the level of a simple liaison agency ... but will create, on foot of a mandate from the Unions themselves, a Production Company and a Distribution Company [...] We will thereby have insurance, starting now, against cinema’s continuing to be a plaything in the hands of meddlers and schemers who look upon it as something to be toyed with or used for unspeakable ends. We are opposed to centralisation when it does individual initiative to

death, but we embrace it when it faithfully mirrors the individual and the collectivity.'

In the invitations it issued for the National Plenum of Public Entertainments Union, the FNIEPE devoted items 8, 9 and 10 to discussion, respectively, of the establishment of a National Supplies Committee, a National Distributor and a National Production Company. The first of these bodies would see to the procurement of spares and replacement parts for projection equipment, much of which was in poor condition and hard to repair in that in many cases the equipment was of foreign manufacture. Also, in medium sized or small towns the unions had difficulty in securing foreign currency and spares would be cheaper if bought in bulk.

For its part, the National Distributor would consist of a central office and regional branches. Thanks to it, the dearth of films (and especially of ideologically like-minded films) would be resolved, in that all of the copies then scattered around the various segments of the union or the union's various production companies could be collected there. As for the National Production Company, its purpose was not to put paid to the filming carried out by the Barcelona and Madrid local unions, but to boost anarchist output through another production company, a body essentially supported by the whole gamut of entertainments employees. The brand name of this production company would be decided by the Entertainments Federation's own workers. What mattered was its editorial policy which would focus upon the shooting of three sorts of films:

1. Educational films which a) delivered school syllabuses (training), b) educated audiences in anarchist principles (propaganda).
2. Entertainment films, either comedies or dramas 'whereby we shall strive not to create problems or crises of conscience for anybody just out to while away some time'.
3. Hybrid films, partly educational and partly recreational 'so that audiences, on viewing them, may be stirred up and which may broach issues of self-improvement for the individual without his being aware of it, this being the type of production that should be of greatest importance to us'. [19]

The FNIEPE finally held its National Plenum in December 1937, but scarcely any headway was made in any of the three fields, due to internal squabbling as well as anarchism's



ongoing loss of ground to the institutions of the republican State.

The Higher Technical Council of Cinematography

By contrast, the congress of Valencia did have an impact on SIE Films' operations and, as we shall see, on the editorial policy of the Madrid production centre. Towards the end of July, the SIE's chairman dismissed all of the leaders of the Film Production Committee on charges of ad hoc policy-making, being disorganised, having no appreciation of movies, maladministration and, in some cases, lining their own pockets. On 21 August 1937 a replacement committee or Higher Technical Council of Cinematography — also known as the National Production Committee — was appointed, almost as if Barcelona was embracing the FNIPE's proposal to establish a National Production Company. Among the incoming leadership were Alberto Núñez (chairman), Juan Saña (secretary), Antonio Cuadrado (treasurer), Adolfo de la Riva (technical director), Francisco Elías (artistic director) and Dotras Vila (musical director).

Outstanding among these was Juan Saña, another veteran anarchist battler. Saña had served time in jail under the Dictatorship and in exile and had held high office in the CNT (serving on its national council). Likewise, and as in other cases, he came from a different profession (as a machine fitter) and from a different trade union (the metalworkers' union).

The first decision made by the new line-up was to suspend the screening of some already completed films or films on the brink of completion, the view being that these were of the direst quality or ideologically inappropriate. It seems that this

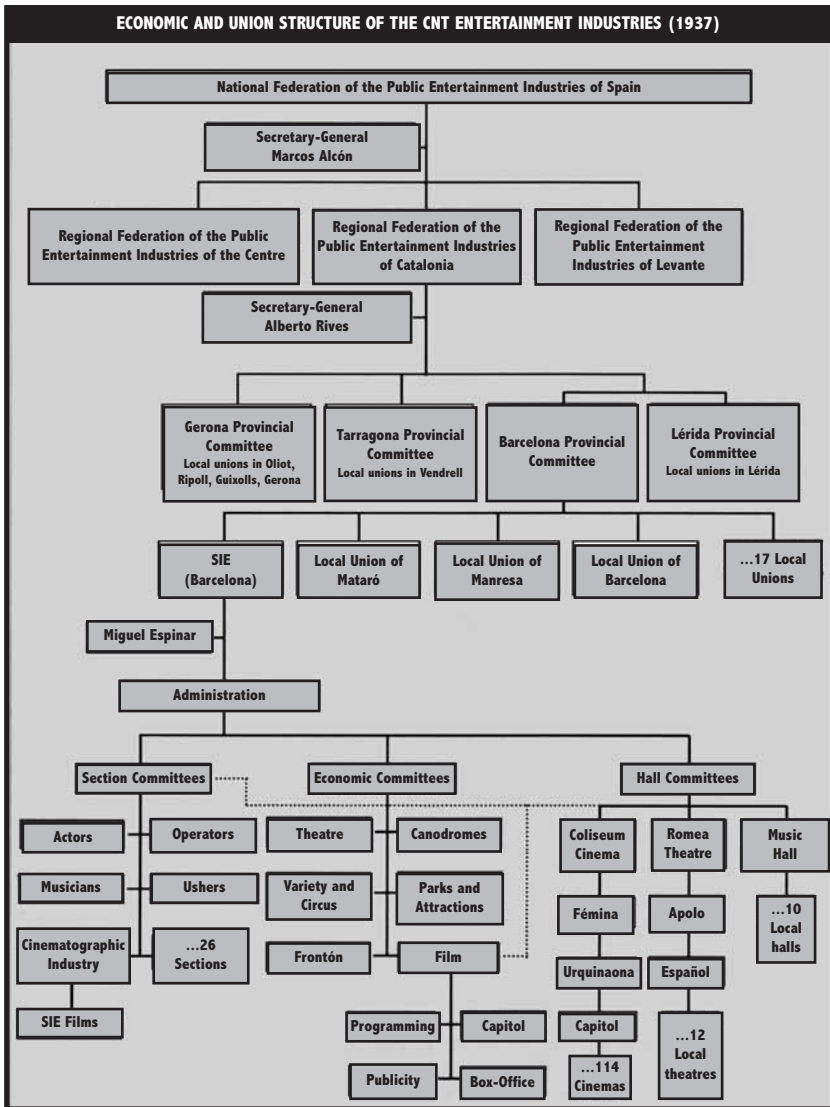
Funeral of
Buenaventura
Durruti:
Barcelona, 21
November, 1936

is what happened with *La última*, *Como fieras*, *Liberación* and the medium-length musical based on Isaac Albéniz's oeuvre, *Cataluña* (1937). Several other films in the planning stages were cancelled, among them the mid-length feature *Beethoven* and the full length fiction movies *Chindasvinto*, *rey de Uralia*, plus *Naturaleza* and *Resurgimiento*. [20]

The next step involved suspending production on so-called propaganda movies that were judged unduly partisan, while reportage from the front lines and rearguard adopted a less triumphalist tone in closer harmony with government policy. Thus *El general Pozas visita el frente de Aragón* (1937) and *El ejército de la victoria* (1937) were paeans to an institution, the Regular Army, that had put paid to the anarchist militias: *20 de noviembre* (1937) commemorated the death of Durruti; *Forjando la victoria* (1937), *Motores de aviación* (1937) and *Así nació una industria* (1938) dealt with the importance of the war industries; *Frente de Teruel* (1937), *Teruel ha caído* (1937) or *1937: Tres fechas gloriosas* (1938) focused on the fierce fighting for Teruel: and *Bajo las bombas fascistas* (1938) and *Bombas sobre el Ebro* (1938) dealt with Nationalist air raids. In addition, they carried on shooting films on behalf of other organisations, at this point *Alas negras* (1937), sponsored by the 28th Division's War Commissariat and *Las doce palabras de la victoria/Homenaje a Pestaña* (1937) for the Syndicalist Party.

In the end, the Higher Technical Council of Cinematography introduced a change in the editorial line of full length features designed to make them greater successes at the box office and thus, bigger earners. In its view, the pilot films shot by the First Production Committee had failed to pull this off for four reasons. For a start, they were short of competent professionals, especially directors.

Secondly, there had been undue theatrical influence, whether on filming style or because the plots had been borrowed from the theatre. Thirdly, the plots had been better suited to the serials of the previous century, so that the 'Spanish' had given way to the 'socialised', meaning movies of cheap and phony emotion (the unemployed guy, the orphaned child, the beggar, the exploited woman...), resulting in films that dulled the sensibilities of the audience in that they offered a far from dynamic image of the proletariat, and were also poison at the box office. That there was a problem with story lines was confirmed by the first Production Committee's



Script Bureau. According to one of its members, the Bureau had received from 160 to 170 story lines, but the vast majority had been of no interest at all, being incompatible with the revolutionary times through which the country was passing or having been penned by novices. Finally, the partisan and dogmatic message of earlier productions came in for criticism. As Miguel Espinar said:

‘Cinema cannot be at the beck and call of any faction. Its vocation is much loftier than that. It should be didactic. Setting out the facts, sure, but never in a partisan fashion ... Only dictatorships can reduce art to the service of dogma.’ [21]

In other words, whereas the first Film Production Committee had prioritized the production of partisan movies produced by militants who were not always experienced, the Cinemas Economic Committee which funded and planned such productions, was disappointed because the SIE Films brand name was not filling the cinemas nor bringing in profits. So it imposed a second production committee and insisted upon a change of policy which made room, as the FNIEPE had pointed out, for movies offering sheer entertainment.

The Higher Technical Council of Cinematography set about making films to please and entertain all audiences — regardless of ideology and even with an eye to making movies for export. Thus, box office success would guarantee the standard of living and jobs of the anarchist workers in the entertainments field. The review *Espectáculo*, the mouthpiece of the SIE, had this to say:

‘Let’s make commercial movies with an eye to the outside world. And at the moment the outside world is only going to embrace that which we cannot as much as imitate: the atmospheric, the stereotypical, the conventional or the classic, alongside landscape and, if you will, history.’ [22]

By way of introducing this new editorial policy, a start was made on the filming of *No quiero ... No quiero!* (1937-1940). Now, as it transpired, this movie too was based on a theatrical drama, this time by Jacinto Benavente and, although it offered a critique of the bourgeois education system, it was filmed in a mainstream Hollywood-style, with such a massive budget that it very quickly became known as the ‘million movie’. In short, its contradictions and the very conservative switch in editorial policy — which nonetheless coincided with what had already occurred in terms of scheduling in the movie theatres where many ‘bourgeois’ movies were screened—led to a further failure by SIE Films and, instead of facing charges of partisanship, it now stood accused of being counter-revolutionary.

What is more, under the stewardship of the new directorial team, the number of films produced decreased exponentially, due either to shortage of funds, the rising cost of raw materials, or power cuts. For example, a metre of negative soared from 1.10 pesetas to nine pesetas and film for recording sound track from 0.40 to three pesetas. Add to this the other increases, especially in terms of the wages bill, and

it has been estimated that production costs grew by 500 per cent. And obstructionism by 'fractious' workers or the incompetence of the new leadership (who stood accused of ineptitude and profligacy by some of the members of the first Production Committee) was not much help either, as it highlighted the existence of serious differences and fierce internal clashes.

In fact, the anarchist movement split into at least two factions. The first so-called professional or corporate faction gave pride of place to social achievements, which is to say, box office sales and what this meant for the workers: adequate pay-packets, elimination of unemployment, pensions, sickness insurance, etc. This approach was represented by the Cinemas Economic Committee and by the SIE, ie. by those in control of the means of production. The second faction, the so-called political and proselytising faction, wanted to see a prompt and thoroughgoing overhaul of cinema in terms of form and content. It was represented by the CNT's Press and Propaganda Sections and by the more radical members of the CNT national committee.

Its powers were purely theoretical, the word signifying two things: doctrinal clout and apparent power.

Entertainments Take-over

Again, this internal squabbling was seized upon by the Generalitat, the PSUC, the UGT and the central government. This time the strategy was not municipalisation of the Entertainment Industry but a take-over of it, another formula that also sought to put paid to the anarcho-syndicalist revolutionary project. On 19 January 1938, Joan Comorera, the head of the Generalitat's Economy Department, himself a militant of the PSUC and a declared enemy of anarchists, determined that the Public Entertainments Industry in Catalonia came under the remit of the 20 November 1937 decree, whereby the home rule (Generalitat) government could assume control of any undertaking if the proper governance of the country so required. He justified this decision by invoking the need to put paid to inept, individualistic, partisan and counter-revolutionary management of the entertainments sector.

The SIE's response was to declare a general strike that on 22 January 1938 shut down every entertainment outlet in the city. Only when Comorera recognised the power of the CNT did

anarchist leaders agree to accept the take-over of the industry. And they did so on the advice of Juan García Oliver and, above all, because they secured control of the Public Entertainments Audit Commission, a Generalitat agency which from then on oversaw all entertainments ventures in Catalonia, these being grouped into nine precincts or districts. Actually, the institution in question was headed by Miguel Espinar, Rosalio Alcón and, representing the UGT, Carlos Viana. Pere Oliva Puig was the auditor appointed by the Finance Department. Likewise, a Workers' Advisory Working Party was established, comprising three representatives from the CNT and three from the UGT. This working party developed into a workers' monitoring committee advising the Audit Commission, amalgamating with the latter to form a Council of Directors. In the event of differences between the commission and the working party, the casting vote belonged to the Economy Department.

The Audit Commission accorded itself five main tasks:

1. Legalising the take-over of the entertainments industry once and for all.
2. Offering consistent management of the various forms of entertainment, so that those (such as the theatre) in a state of crisis might receive aid from the better endowed sectors such as film.
3. Improving the production of film and scheduling in movie theatres and striking a better balance between Spanish cinema and foreign cinema with assurances that official propaganda films would be screened in order to boost the spirit of resistance and combat in the build-up to the next Nationalist offensive.
4. Breathing fresh life into international trade in film.
5. Copper-fastening the social gains that had been achieved.

Although all these targets were perfectly laudable, fear of losing control of the ventures ensured that it was not until 21 April 1938 that the anarchist grassroots gave up on socialisation, when militants voted to join the Public Entertainments Audit Commission, which in fact they did on 1 May 1938. It needs to be understood that by that point the union was in such dire straits that the leaders in charge of SIE Films had to apply to the CNT national committee for a 60,000 peseta loan, promising that, thanks to the take-over of the movie industry, they would shortly have the box office earnings with which to repay the loan. SIE Films chairman

Alberto Núñez stated:

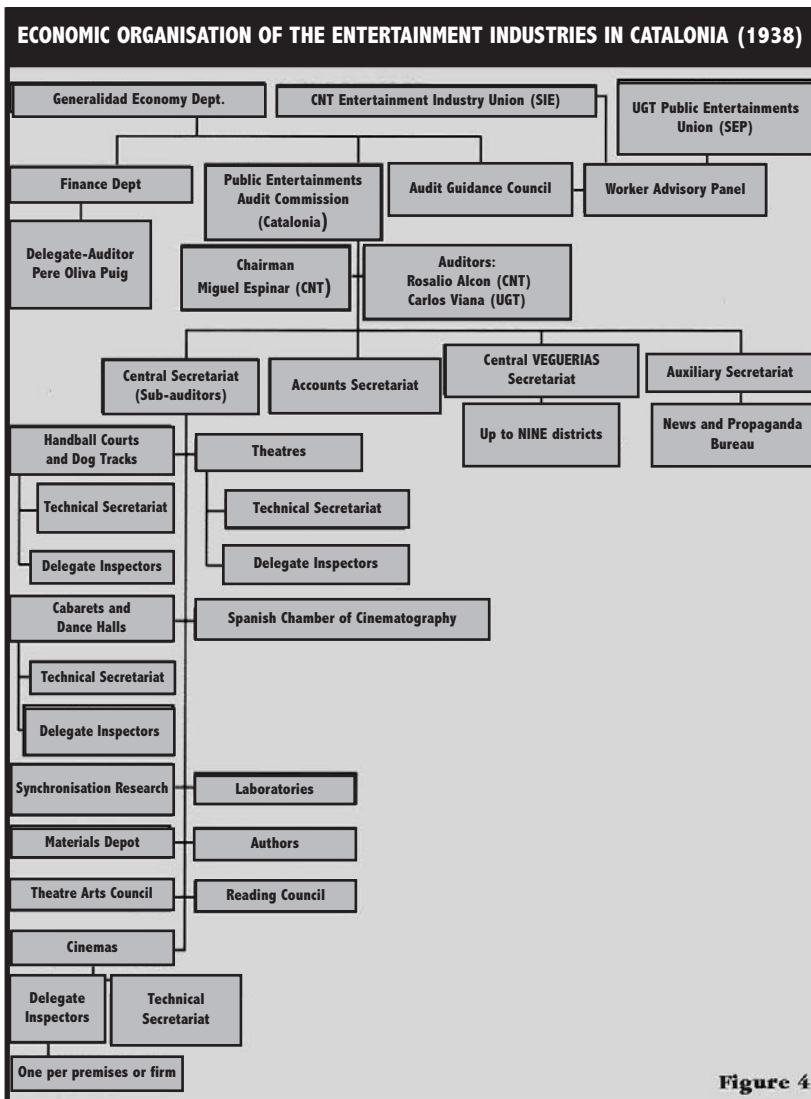
‘As a result of the air raids and irregularities in the supply of electrical power, our industrial economy has been tremendously damaged, for which reason the Film Production Section, which has no independent existence, has, for some weeks now, been suffering substantial delays in receiving revenues, a set-back that affects a sizable number of workers whose straitened finances has become a demoralising factor at a point when they have nowhere to turn for loans of any sort.’ [23]



Bujaraloz: Durruti informing his men that some of the column will go to defend Madrid

We might say that this letter signalled the beginning of the end for the film production arrangements set in place by the SIE. Of course, other anarchist agencies tried to get fresh shoots under way, but with poor results. This was the case with the CNT-FAI Propaganda Bureau. In 1938 it set up a Film Branch with a 16 mm. film and projection team, but due to difficulties with equipment and the lack of facilities was only able to complete its first film, the subject of which was the first anniversary of Durruti's death and the funeral of the astronomer Comás Sola. [24]

This collapse in production was followed by the collapse of the distribution sector. As we have indicated, programmes in Barcelona in those years were made up of foreign films, essentially American films, the favourites with audiences as well as with opinion-forming media such as the press, the anarchist press included. Here we should point out that, even though we may find specialist articles in the pages of *Umbral*, *Mi Revista* or *Solidaridad Obrera* from the likes of Carrascal de la Rubia, Les, Somacarrera, Silvia Mistral or Pepe García, the film pages were dominated by Hollywood (gossip and stills photos) or by imitations of its advertising approaches applied to the Spanish star system. This was another great failure for the revolutionary change, one exposed at the time by those calling for the replacement of covert advertising by genuine criticism and by articles exploring style, subject



matter, acting techniques, industrial organisation, links to politics or indeed the oeuvre of those film-makers most highly prized for their social commentary and artistic qualities.

Returning to the distribution end of things, the only discernible change was the presence of Soviet films, in that, prior to the Entertainments Audit Commission, these had been pushed aside and even banned. Film trade with the Soviet Union was the big innovation of the 1930s. And this trade became more and more obvious as the dearth of foreign currency and inability to pay reduced imports from those countries that had traditionally marketed their movies in Spain

to a trickle, although the fact is that Soviet cinema's presence was more symbolic than substantial, maybe because even Film Popular, the firm that dealt in Soviet films, complained about the low rents paid for the hire of movies.

So serious had the shortage of films become that in September 1938 the Entertainments Audit Commission tried to come to an arrangement with the Spanish Cinematography Chamber (CEC). However, the distributors refused to offer their 1938-1939 productions as long as they had to deal with local screening monopolies and, in any case, it was impossible for them to move their earnings out of Spain. In fact, the CEC was taken over in January 1938, like the rest of the entertainment industry, except that it was allowed to operate with minimal interference. A time came, though, when the CEC stopped the supply of films to premises with debts outstanding for rentals prior to 19 July 1936, a boycott that led to the company's being in more direct financial straits from November 1938 on.

But the decision by the Public Entertainments Audit Commission to take the Spanish Cinematography Chamber under its wing did not solve the problem either. Foreign capital had finally stopped sustaining the Republic. At this point, Hollywood could only hope that reprisals from the Francoists on the basis that it had traded with 'the enemy' might be averted or mitigated. In turn, the collapse of production and distribution triggered the gradual collapse of movie screening throughout Catalonia. Movie halls re-ran movies from previous seasons over and over again and also had to contend with air raids, power cuts and audiences inhibited by rising living costs. Interruptions to the power supply, for instance, led to changes in screening time-tables, the cancellation of one showing or several and saw the cinema give way to theatre shows staged under natural lighting, led to the closure of some premises or to the cinemas in a given locality taking it in turns. Air raids carried out against Barcelona damaged 13 cinemas and three theatres; three of the cinemas and two of the theatres were either seriously damaged or deemed unusable. Likewise, the influx of refugees and the use of cinemas and theatres to accommodate them led to the suspension of entertainment services in some areas of Catalonia.

Against this increasingly difficult backdrop, it is scarcely surprising that CNT personnel agreed to enter into

negotiations with the UGT in their quest for unity of action or the grouping of the entire industry under the umbrella of a single entertainments union in Catalonia, as it was elsewhere in Republican Spain. Now, the coalition between the CNT and the UGT was never a proper reality, no matter how much the downturn in the fortunes of the war might have commended unity of action between them.

It was the very organisations going by the names of the CNT-UGT Public Entertainments Industry of Catalonia and the Entertainments Audit Commission that determined, on 23 January 1939, that all cinemas, studios and other workplaces in the industry in Barcelona should close to allow the workforce to rally to the city's defences. But after months of food shortages, air raids and internecine squabbling, cinema folk, like the rest of the citizenry, had no stomach left for the fight, so that on 26 January 1939 the city fell to Francoist troops without a fight.

Socialisation of cinema in Madrid

In the Spanish capital, revolution also followed within days of the Uprising and here too it consisted of a take-over or workers' control of cinema companies. This take-over was justified in terms of the suspension of production or of the obstacles that employers were putting in the way of the normal operation of the entertainments sector. Both factors led to unemployment levels of 70 per cent, which was construed as an attempt to sabotage the republican order. Furthermore, on 2 August the government itself issued a decree endorsing these moves. In this initial stage, each of the movie companies taken over operated independently under the supervision of a workers' committee that might be affiliated to numerous political bodies, for, unlike what was happening in Barcelona, in the capital no single worker force enjoyed hegemony. Thus there were cinemas under Unified Socialist Youth control, under Communist Party of Spain control, under UGT control, under International Red Aid control and even under the control of Military Brigades.

As for the CNT workers, their organisation took control of those film concerns where its militants were in the majority, ie. the Ballesteros Studios, the Fono Española dubbing company, and sixteen entertainments outlets (Madrid had between 62 and 64 such outlets). It is important to emphasize that the businesses in anarchist hands were not socialised;



rather, each form operated independently, under the supervision of its workforce in a collectivisation arrangement.

Alongside these developments, the number of CNT-affiliated Madrid entertainments workers, previously not very significant, began to grow by leaps and bounds, either because membership was tantamount to a safe conduct pass or because, in its eagerness to garner a large number of members and thus compete with the UGT, the organisation was none too choosy when it came to handing out credentials. The fact is that this expansion led to the establishment of the One Big Film Industry and Public Entertainments Union (SUICEP). Among its leaders were Manuel Lara, who was later a CNT national committee delegate for the entertainments sector, and José Iglesias.

Similarly, the CNT National Committee and its Centre Regional Federation agreed to a suggestion from the director Armand Guerra, an anarchist militant, that the revolutionary movement be filmed, to which he used the cast and crew from his latest film *Carne de fieras* (1936). Thus were born the very first war documentaries produced under the SUICEP brand name. I refer to the *Estampas de guerra* series (1936).



Armand Guerra
(José Estivalis
Cabo) 1886-
1939

After these advances, the anarchists got in touch with the UGT, the largest union in Madrid, in order to proceed with a complete take-over of the film industry, especially the movie studios. The latter were retained under the control of the workforce organised into workers' councils, but yet again there was the occasional case when the workers' council existed in name only, to the extent that it sought to keep the company owner's assets safe. Likewise, the position of the entertainment outlets which operated unhindered or in the service of particular political and economic interests was denounced by the labour organisations, in that there were instances of inept or fraudulent management leaving the workers doing right by the former employer without wages. With an eye to resolving these problems, in October 1936 SUICEP drafted some heads of agreement for the establishment of a Mixed Audit Committee regulating the transition to a socialised economic arrangement. However, the UGT's central executive disapproved of socialisation and disowned its own entertainments section which had given its approval to the heads of agreement.

Within days, the encirclement of the capital by Nationalist troops forced the mobilisation of all workers, so that entertainments were suspended from 8 to 17 November. After that date, the second stage of anarchist management began. The SUICEP put paid to collectivisations and brought all of the properties under the control of its membership under social ownership. That is, on 18 November, the anarchist entertainments forms reopened, operating now under a shared income and expenditure arrangement. This common budget allowed theatre performances to carry on, for their loss-making was compensated for by the high revenues brought in by the movie halls. Likewise, part of the money raised in cinemas was set aside for the opening of three studios: the Ballesteros Studios, the Fono España and the CEA, the latter being on a lease. Thus the SUICEP provided employment for its members, made good the lack of cooperation from foreign distributors and, above all, equipped itself with an industrial infrastructure that that allowed it to produce on its own account. Producing pilots such as *Cain!*, war reports and reportage from the rearguard such as *Intelectuales* (1936), *Castilla libertaria* (1936), *Frente Libertario* (1937), *Solidaridad valenciana* (1937), *Valencia y sus naranjos* (1937), *Hijos del pueblo* (1937) or *Hechos* (1937). Actually, as of the end of 1937, it embarked upon twenty antifascist documentary films, two sketches and two full length features, costing two million pesetas plus another 150,000 spent on the upkeep, repair and preservation of its studios. [25]

But the anarchists' decision to pursue the revolutionary process was soon sabotaged by the Junta de Defensa and the Communists. In January 1937, a Public Entertainments Council was formed to manage all the movie halls and entertainment outlets in Madrid. The object was to legitimize the sectarian exploitation enforced by the political parties and public bodies. This amounted to nationalising the industry, something that the SUICEP found as unacceptable as the capitalist system. Or at least so it was stated by the Local Plenum of the CNT Unions of Madrid, held around this time.

In order to retain its own economic arrangement, the CNT decided to join forces with the UGT by means of a liaison committee headed by the anarchist actor José Alted. Subsequently, both union groupings paid a visit to General Miaja and later to José Carreño España, the director of the



Entertainments Council. The unions submitted a management plan according to which they would abide by the Council's instructions with regard to the political, moral, public order and security aspects of the entertainment sector. Now the economic and socialisation side of things were due to remain in the hands of both trade union groupings, each of which had three representatives on the council. Yet the UGT entertainment workers pulled out once again and the cooperation between the two factions turned to rivalry. Apparently somebody persuaded them that there might be a repetition of what was happening in Barcelona where the UGT members had been pushed aside. In the newspaper *Castilla Libre*, José Alted replied that SUICEP's intention was to socialise 'for the good of all and for you and we to carry everything through together'. [26]

The fact is that as of 16 March 1937, entertainments in Madrid came under José Carreño's remit in every aspect. Of course, the SUICEP had proportional representation on the board, but found itself outnumbered, since the UGT representatives and Defence Council representatives opposed the anarchists' case. 'Opposed as it is to the promotion of friction in circumstances that require genuine, solid unity between workers', the SUICEP accepted the position. [27]

This Entertainments Council was broken down as follows into a Theatre Delegation (complemented by a Reading Committee to determine repertoire), a Cinema Delegation, a Mixed Entertainments (and Variety) Delegation, a Propaganda and Advertising Delegation, and an Audit and Supplies Delegation that looked after administration and advanced whatever was needed for the use and upkeep of amenities. Directly or indirectly, the activity generated by all these delegations provided for the upkeep of 10,000 families.

For an assessment of the stewardship of the Entertainments Council, we must turn yet again to its Memoria. According to this, between 16 March 1937 and 31 October 1937, the 62 premises under the Council's control took 21,344, 593 pesetas in receipts. 55 per cent of this revenue went on wages (theatre staff, troupe members and artistes), 'One per cent was set aside for the purchase of films, six per cent for printing and advertising costs, five per cent was paid out in royalties to authors, two per cent to cover power charges and one per cent on the costs and upkeep of sound equipment, among other things. Most of the 21 million-odd pesetas

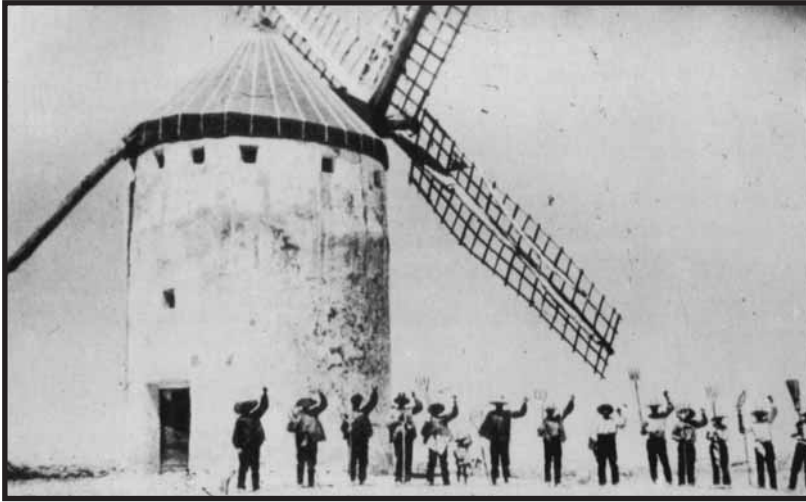
derived from the cinemas, whereas theatres were more than one million pesetas in the red. It is plain from the figures that the Entertainments Council largely adhered to the guidelines laid down by anarchist socialisation. For instance, the wages bill rose steeply and the cost of film purchase fell by a half. The odd thing, to say the least, is that the Entertainments Council raked in 21 million pesetas from 62 outlets in seven months, whereas the Cinemas Economic Committee in Barcelona brought in 30 millions from 112 outlets in 17 months, bearing in mind that Madrid was a city right in the firing line.

As in Barcelona, stage three was marked by the decisions adopted by the National Public Entertainments Federation of Spain in Valencia. The Federation's criticisms of 'meddlers and schemers' within the production committees prompted Manuel Lara to entrust A. Polo with carrying out a comprehensive overhaul. [28] Prior to that, Polo had been on the Defence Committee and was not even a member of the entertainment workers' union, nor had he any cinema experience.

Manuel Lara appointed him because he was on the look-out for a vigorous and reliable political delegate to put the production sector in order and put paid to the pilfering of materials and resources, acting on the advice of the people whom he himself had chosen, in this instance Enrique Fernández Sagasetta (assistant director), Fernando Mignoni (scenery designer and director), Alberto Arroyo (cameraman) or Perrote, the head of the Laboratorios Madrid Films.

Polo started off with a series of measures dealing with productions already in progress. For a start, he trimmed down Fernando Roldán's feature length *Así venceremos!* (1937), until it was reduced to a 'short'. Next he suspended work on *Castilla se liberta*, on the peasant revolution in the Centre region, because the organisation funding it, the Peasant Federation, would not cough up more money. Finally, he left unfinished a number of of the previous team's projects which were being shot without scripts or work plans. I am referring here to the documentaries *Hambrientos del mundo* and *Tierra Jarama*, to Enrique Paso's film *Pan* and to the full length fiction work *Cain!*, the anti-clerical script of which had been given an award by the Ministry of Public Education.

Secondly, when it came to releasing movies (now under the Spartacus Films, FREIPC or 'Centro Films FRIEPC' imprints)



Polo took a number of decisions. In order to compete with the communist newsreels *España al día*, he set up the *Momentos de España* newsreels (1937-1938), of which seven editions were released with great difficulty. He kept up the production of documentaries, but ensured that the tone of these was less shrill and more governmental, although in reality this policy cannot always be verified in that many of the titles — *Madrid sufrido y héroico* (1937), *Hechos* (1937), *Teruel por la República* (1937) or *Aquellas milicias* (1938) — have since been lost. Similarly, using the footage from *Castilla se liberta*, he produced three films: *Olivos y aceite* (1937), *Evacuación* (1937) and *Ganadería* (1937). Finally, in order to generate work for the studios and entertain audiences fed up with propaganda that was promptly exposed as false by developments on the front lines, he took the same line as *No quiero ... No quiero!* and gave the go-ahead for the shooting of a pure entertainment (others described it as bourgeois) *Nuestro culpable* (1938). Fernando Mignoni took charge of the script and the direction and the finest performers and technicians, whether CNT members or not. But problems with the shoot and differences of opinion with more radical sectors of the CNT were such that Polo lost his job before the movie ever reached the screen.

In fact, by that point anarchist production in Madrid was in such dire straits as to be on the verge of collapse. Remember that during 1938 the libertarian movement as a whole turned out only 17 films, when the figure for 1937 had been 60, and that for the five months of operation in 1938 28: meaning that

less than half as many films were produced as in previous years. In the case of the FRIEPC, this agency was to have received 12.5 per cent of the receipts taken by the Entertainment Council through the city's movie theatres. But, just as the anarchists had intuitively recognised, the Entertainments Council not only put paid to socialisation of the cinemas, but withheld the funds needed for film production. This led initially to their refusing to have any truck with the new Entertainments Council, following a reshuffle in the wake of the October decree from the government. Likewise, they accused the management of unnecessary expenditure and adopting an arbitrary approach to the appointment, hiring and firing of staff. On 14 December 1937, the newspaper *CNT* carried the following complaint:

'Even though our Union was putting every effort, enthusiasm and penny into producing trade union and antifascist films, even though our Union, with no expense spared, completely equipped out a film laboratory and studios [...] all that our union (like its UGT counterpart) managed to extract from the Madrid Entertainments Council, over its eight months in operation, was the sum of a hundred and fifty thousand pesetas!, a very tiny sum if compared with the THREE MILLION pesetas said Council has in its coffers today.'



International Antifascist Solidarity — Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista (SIA)

If the Madrid anarchists, and their counterparts in Barcelona were to carry on shooting movies, they had to procure funding from other union organisations or sympathetic institutions. Here it is worth highlighting the activities of International Antifascist Solidarity (SIA). The libertarian

movement launched this body in July 1937 because its leaders reckoned that International Red Aid/Socorro Rojo Internacional (SRI) was being used as a secret conduit for funds to the Spanish Communist Party. That is, the CNT set up a body to compete with the communists in raising funds destined, in theory, for medical and social aid such as help for refugees, homes, kindergartens, food distribution, winter-aid campaigns, building bomb shelters and fortifications, etc. The organisation was funded by contributions from its 150,000 members (other sources put the figure at 200,000). These members were scattered around 400 local branches.

There was also a prominent presence abroad, especially in France and the United States, for the belief was that the most useful aid would come from abroad: hence the designation International. The designation 'antifascist' was meant to prevent the organisation's being classified as anarchist and thereby denied donations from people who, while being leftwing or progressive, were rather diffident about the libertarian movement.



Another important source of funding for the SIA were bequests and fund-raiser events. The latter normally took the form of live artistic performances and/or film screenings. One such programme involved the screening of the following movies: *Aquellas Milicias* (1938); the newsreel *Amparado*; the documentary *Hijos del pueblo* (1937); a musical comedy *Centinela alerta!* (1936) featuring the singer and actor Angelillo. A plan to raise some six million pesetas in theatres and cinemas across republican Spain to be spent on compensation and reconstruction of the homes of air raid victims in Madrid proved a failure.

In addition, the SIA launched a theatre troupe of its own and shot its own films. These were films with a political message, for the SIA's director, M. Barruta Vila, refused to allow its charitable activity be lumped with the hidebound charitable activities of his great enemy, the Church. Actually, the SIA funded four films: *Homenaje a los fortificadores de Madrid* (1937) [29], dedicated by the local Madrid branch to the Army of the Centre; *Amanecer sobre España* (1938), a film made under the auspices of the CNT; *19 de julio* or *SIA en el 19 de julio* (1938) [30] and *Misión de SIA* (this latter title may well not have been finished) [31]. The SIA also featured in issues Nos 4 and 6 of the anarchist newsreel *Momentos de España* with items dealing with 'Madrid Day' and 'Child Week', respectively. Similarly, one of its chapters in the United States filmed *Picnic del SIA* (1938) an amateur silent 16 mm. movie showing the picnic held on 28 August 1938 under the aegis of a number of anarchist sympathisers.

The Ministry of Public Education and Health

We should also mention the films produced by anarchists under the auspices of the ministries under their control, films that might equally be classified under the heading we referred to elsewhere, as films designed to help out the cabinet with its task of government, although since the government line-up at the time included a range of forces, these films ultimately acquired a partisan outlook.

Specifically, I am referring to the films produced by the Ministry of Public Education and Health which, from 6 April 1938 on, was headed by CNT militant Segundo Blanco González. These films were shot by two agencies.

The first was the *Milicias de Cultura* (Cultural Militias), an expert body of teachers within the Army that was established in February 1937 by the communists for the purpose of training troops and delivering literacy classes. When they took over at the ministry, the anarchists placed their own intellectuals — people such as Les — in charge of this body. A scheme of which Les had this to say may well date from this time:

‘I put it to SIE Films that we should produce a newsreel series under the umbrella title *Reportaje* and, together with L. Wensell, embarked upon the first *Reportaje Relámpago de Milicias de la Cultura*, work on which was called off for reasons beyond our control.’ [32]

The fact is the organisation in question completed filming of *España vieja* (1938) which toed the same line as SIE productions and specifically of *Aurora de Esperanza* (from which it borrowed several images).

The second ministerial agency was the Department of Mechanical Teaching Aids/Departamento de Auxiliares Mecánicos de Enseñanza, a corps dedicated to the storage, production and screening of cultural and educational films, among them the ones used by the Educational Missions/Misiones Pedagógicas. [33] This 16 mm. film library was also available to the Cultural Militias. Between February 1937 and May 1938, the Militias held 538 screenings on the battle-fronts.

To take charge of the mechanic teaching aids, the libertarian movement chose Antonio Graciani who was appointed chief of Picture Propaganda with the ministry’s Press and Propaganda Bureau. Graciani was in charge of a budget of



750,000 pesetas which was initially designed for use on the production and procurement of educational and cultural films. Using these funds, he made a film about a children's outing to the Colonias Sitges under the title *La República protege a sus niños* (1938) and another film on the *Feria del Libro 1938* (Barcelona) (1938). Graciani also drafted the scripts for ten training documentaries for primary education teachers.

Defeat and Exile

Returning to the activities of the Madrid anarchists, the lack of funds and raw materials, together with efforts by the CNT and UGT throughout 1938 to agree unity of action gave rise to the establishment of another agency that achieved little, the UGT-CNT Centre Regional Cooperative of Public Entertainments Industry Professionals. According to its statutes, the object of the cooperative was to raise the economic, moral, cultural and professional standards of film workers and to 'replace the role of money in social relationships with the idea of service'. According to A. Polo, the secret aim of José Iglesias, the general secretary of the FRIEPC up until November 1938, was to set up an organisation capable of surviving the end of the war, to which the cooperative gathered around it hundreds of individuals with considerable sway and influence within the Francoist camp. The fact is that the Madrid anarchists called off their production in order to pursue all their film plans through this new body. Although in fact not one of them came to fruition.

Finally, the conflict between communists and followers of Colonel Casado just prior to the fall of Madrid led to the closure of all entertainment outlets from 7 to 14 March 1939.

After the latter date, the cinemas remained open, even during the occupation, for in the wake of the communists' defeat, the Soviet propaganda films vanished and the cinemas, studios and other movie-related amenities were seized by the Fifth Column and the underground Falange, one of the members of which, Felipe Lluch, wrote the following:



'The secretary of the FET y de las JONS Film and Public Entertainments Industry Syndicate, comrade Carlos Fernández Cuenca, commissioned the undersigned to take charge of the Entertainments Council of Madrid so as to ensure continuity of civil life and, when the time came, to hand over the entertainment industry, as taken under the wing of the so-called government of the Republic, to the National Syndicalist State.

In accord with these instructions, on 28 March [1939] I took possession of the Entertainments Council as FET delegate-general and, in concert with the previously designated comrades who had been placed under my command, managed to keep entertainments outlets open right up until they reverted to the State. The only ones suspended were those used for the screening of films shot after 18 July and which, on account of their indecorous character, were incompatible with the spirit of the Movement.

On the morning of 1 April all cinemas were handed over to the National Film Department and that afternoon the theatres too were handed over to the corresponding National Department, with the members of the commission who, with the undersigned, took over the Council, remaining as advisors or partners with said Departments regarding the complete liquidation of the debts of the defunct Entertainments Councils.' [34]

In short, during the civil war Spanish anarchism set in motion a film production system, socialisation, that generated a new, alternative cinema on such a scale as to appear capable of replacement of the production generated under the free market arrangement. That production (upwards of a hundred titles produced) breaks down into three time periods and editorial lines:

1. The blatantly militant war reportage produced in Barcelona by the CNT-FAI and the SUEP and, in Madrid by the SUICEP (up until October-November 1936).
2. The anarchist socio-industrial scheme SIE Films in Barcelona and of the Madrid anarchists (up until the Valencia congress in July 1937).
3. Production under the aegis of the Second Production

Committee of SIE Films and of the FRIEPC, characterised by an increasingly pro-government line in documentaries and a more commercial approach to fiction films.

As to the root causes of the failure of socialisation, these can be traced to four major contradictions. For one thing, socialisation fed upon the power of the union, but the latter set up a variety of economic committees which proved divisive and even eroded solidarity between the anarchist militants themselves. Secondly, socialisation was dependent upon control of cinemas, but the latter scheduled US movies which were the ultimate expression of the capitalist mode of production. Socialisation ultimately trivialized the rationale for revolutionary change, but also, by affording the social question (wages and loans drawn upon box office receipts) priority over the political question (ideas and formulas spread through movies), set aside little funding — and showed little tenacity — in the purchase or production of a cinema more closely approximating its beliefs. Finally, socialisation was a fillip to the fight against the Nationalists, but the committees were also reluctant to support through levies and donations the wherewithal required to create an Army and a mighty propaganda machine. All of which ensured that the Republican State came out against socialisation and set about taking over the entertainments sector, thereby putting an end to anarchist economic control.

Of course, the defeat did not entail the disappearance of filmmaking activity from the libertarian movement. Thanks to certain titles having been salvaged or to their being circulated outside the country, the organisation in exile carried on promoting filmed propaganda activity, especially after 1945, the aim being to encourage military intervention against Spain. On 6 January 1947, for instance, the SIA orchestrated a film festival in the Imperial Hall in the city of Villeurbanne in France, for the benefit of the Spanish maquis. The movies *Barrios Bajos*, *Amanecer sobre España* and *Entierro de Durruti* were screened. A handbill advertising the festival stated:

‘Spaniards, support this festival massively. Your attendance will be like a token of the determination to win. Your act of solidarity will hasten Franco’s downfall.’ [35]

Commercial production

The anarchists were the only leftwing faction to fund the production during the civil war of fictional 'shorts' and full length features which sometimes were sheer entertainment, the purpose being to ensure industrial production capable of keeping their cinemas supplied with 'product' that could compete with commercial cinema from abroad. In addition, this was a type of cinema that was unprecedented, in terms of conception and content, in the history of Spanish cinema. Themes such as unemployment, class inequality, social exploitation, alcoholism, white slavery — and generally anything to do with the world of the worker — was given great prominence. Of course, whether from lack of determination or political grounding on the part of the people in charge of making these films, these movies were not always to the liking of the CNT leadership and were even deemed counter-productive. Likewise, due to lacks of resources or film training (most of the directors being greenhorns), there was often a descent into melodrama (rendering the plot unrealistic) or into gross technical blunders. In fact, formal shortcomings and lack of professionalism cropped up again and again throughout the entire artistic and literary output of the anarchists, and besides, it was not as if the movies that had preceded them were outstanding, apart from a tiny number of them.

Three examples of this narrative film-making have survived. The first of them, *Aurora de Esperanza* (1937) comes closest to the anarchist outlook. It tells the story of a working man, Juan, who returns from holiday to find that his factory has shut down. When he proves unable to find alternative employment, his family does whatever it can to put food on the table. The position becomes so fraught that his wife,

Barrios Bajos:
1937 (lumpen-
Barcelona)



Marta, secretly takes a job that requires her to sit in a shop window in her lingerie. In the end, Juan sends his family away into the countryside while he carries on the struggle alongside other workers with whom he organises a hunger march. This happens to coincide with the revolution on 19 July and justifies its eruption. It



represents the beginning, the dawning (a convention in social literature) of a new era.

The second film, *Barrios Bajos* (1937) is based on a play by Luis Elías. In the film's opening scenes, Ricardo kills his best friend, who has carried on an affair with his wife. In order to escape the police, he seeks refuge in the slums of Barcelona where a rough and ready, but decent docker, El Valencia lives; he turns out to be a real friend to Ricardo. At the same time, El Valencia rescues Rosa, a young maid, from the white slavers and falls in love with her. In so doing he earns the enmity of Floreal and his gang of pimps, who retaliate by trying to turn Ricardo in to the police. In the end, El Valencia sacrifices his own life so that Rosa and Ricardo who have fallen in love, can flee the city and start a new life.

The film, inspired by French poetic realist cinema, is a paean to the 'noble savage' the decent human being living in the state of nature. Capitalist society, on the other hand, destroys such human nobility, encouraging betrayal and above all the exploitation of man by his fellow man, as well as the sexual exploitation of women, this being a product of the alliance between the bourgeoisie and the lumpen. However, certain leaders saw this film as misguided in that it is set in locations viewed as unpalatable to anarchists — slums and drinking dens.

As for *Nuestro Culpable* (1938), which was shot in Madrid, this is a musical comedy challenging the established order and bourgeois convention, much like certain of René Clair's movies. The plot tells how a petty thief, El Randa, is accused of stealing two million dollars from the banker Urquina. In fact, the robbery was the work of Greta, the banker's lover. The banker, not wanting his extra-marital affair to become known, sees to it that El Randa lives a life of luxury in jail.

Finally, although his lover returns with his money, he persists in pressing charges against El Randa. But this time, the petty thief really does pocket the millions and runs away with Greta.

Yet again, forces of oppression such as the police, the courts, the banks or the lumpenproletariat join forces to harass the penniless (El Randa) and sexually exploit a woman (Greta). Here, although the protagonists emerge the winners, the message is that the bourgeois order can only be outwitted through trickery or freak of fortune: hence the importance of having some 'edge'. With this 'magical key' the film's argument

is as un-revolutionary as the claim that happiness is dependent on luck rather than anything man might do. Likewise the fetishisation of money and the life of Riley are far from orthodox. In the final analysis, like certain ill-grounded or unenthusiastic followers, the movie confuses anarchy with anarchism, the breakdown of law and order with the libertarian order.

Censorship

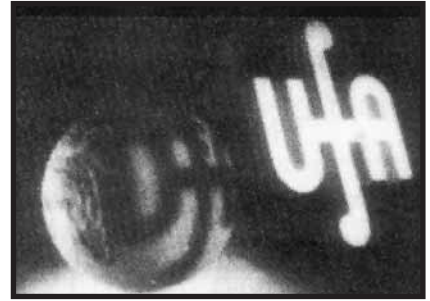
In order to tailor cinema programming to the libertarian ideal or at least prevent the screening of films posing a threat to the war effort, the anarchists introduced a number of controls from the outset of the revolution. The Cinemas Economic Committee's Scheduling Branch, for instance, prevented the screening in Barcelona of films of a 'pronounced reactionary tenor or which tend to discredit the precepts of freedom and humanity by which the National Confederation of Labour (CNT) is informed'. This eliminated clerical pictures and much of the German and Italian output. By contrast, ideologically questionable US films were screened because they held out the prospect of a decent return at the box-office.

Censorship was also exercised by the Cinema Section of the CNT's News and Propaganda Bureau. On 5 August 1936, this Section published an insertion in *Solidaridad Obrera* introducing censorship of filming, which was later enforced also by the SUEP. The intention of such censorship was to prevent filming of events contrary to the revolutionary movement, as well as securing a monopoly for the CNT in news filming. The insertion read:

'News has been reaching the News and Propaganda Bureau (Cinema Branch) from a variety of reliable sources to the effect that within this city *Empresas Particulares* are filming a number of facets of the revolutionary movement. It being neither reasonable nor permissible that bourgeois film-makers should seek to make profits without having risked a thing in the fight against fascism being waged across the whole of Spanish territory, we would alert all comrades serving in the antifascist militias that they should allow no one to shoot film of barricades, public and religious buildings, nor indeed any aspect of the revolutionary upheaval, without checking with the Regional Committee of the CNT and the FAI. In the hands of

bourgeois firms or private individuals, such footage can be used against all the responsible workers' organisations.'

This is precisely what happened with *Reportaje del movimiento revolucionario en Barcelona*. The CNT had entrusted this film to José Arquero, a film importer, for screening in France and for promotion internationally. But Arquero travelled to Berlin and handed the footage over to the Nazis. Shortly after that, the UFA newsreel circulated selected footage across Europe, complemented by a counter-propagandistic presentation and commentary of course. Likewise, the footage of burning churches and the looting of graves were used in several films on the Nationalist side or in a pro-Nationalist sense, as in the case of *España heroica* (1938), as illustrations of the persecution of religion.



This situation forced the CNT to adopt a more cautious approach, which in many instances led to anarchist censorship of its own anarchist filming. For instance, according to Fernández Cuenca (p. 740), in *Aguiluchos de la FAI por tierra de Aragón* (No 12), the Durruti Column, following the capture of Gelsa, tried to burn religious articles from the local church on a bonfire, before desisting in the effort lest it draw the attention of the enemy. These images, though, do not appear in the version of the film preserved at the Filmoteca Española, but there are pictures of militants helping out with the harvest, which gives reason for thinking that the first version was censored.

Another case would be *Barcelona trabaja para el frente* (1936). This film describes the achievements that the CNT's Central Supplies Committee had achieved in terms of food distribution, thanks to the socialisation of the foodstuffs industry. However, the film was banned for fear that there might be riots in the cinemas, since that committee had been abolished following a number of complaints regarding abuses in respect of food distribution, all of which rendered the commentary and images in the film nonsensical.

It is also noteworthy that the CNT-FAI Propaganda Bureau was critical of *Amanecer en España* on the grounds that it was more antifascist than anarchist and above all that it included footage of an entertainment they found very unsuitable — a bullfight. A request was made that footage of the latter event be dropped from the film, which was in fact

implemented in those versions destined for foreign viewers. This, shall we say, internal censorship was repeated in a format known under capitalism as economic censorship. That is, a ban on the part of the producers themselves — in this case, SIE Films — on certain productions, or the removal of scenes, shoots and dialogue or indeed the delaying or cancellation of screening. *Aurora de Esperanza*, for instance, was subjected to a number of rewrites. And the second Committee prevented the screening of *La última*, *Como fieras*, *Liberación* or *Cataluña* and cancelled a number of projected films such as *Chindasvinto*, *rey de Uralia*.

Thirdly, anarchist censorship targeted films produced within the communist orbit. For months, the SUEP prevented the screening in Barcelona of the Generalitat and Spanish Communist Party's *España al día* newsreels and did not always welcome Soviet films. The newspaper *Frente Libertario*, for instance, in its 20 October 1936 edition, attacked the film *The Kronstadt Sailors* because, although splendid in terms of its artistry, its contents were marred by the fact that it ignored the anarchists' role in the Russian Revolution. The paper even blamed the communist Education minister, Jesús Hernández, for 'expending government money and influence on peddling his party's accomplishments'.



Pedro Muñoz Seca: pro-Francoist playwright executed on 17 July 1936 by Republican soldiers at Parcucla de Jarama, Madrid

Repression by and against the Anarchists

The worker violence triggered by the army uprising also hit the cinema owners and entertainments workers labelled as rebels. On the Republican side, for instance, there were shootings of playwrights and scriptwriters (Pedro Muñoz Seca), actors (Tina de Jarque and Fernando Díaz de Mendoza), and cinema entrepreneurs (Tomás de Zubiría). Others

like the Italian Hugo Donarelli, whose form, *Foto-España*, was to be seized by the Madrid anarchists, escaped death thanks to swift intervention by his embassy.

Likewise, in order to encourage the public to shun them, the anarchist press denounced and abused professionals who had defected to the Nationalist camp in order to work on its movies or indeed serve in its Army. Among the directors attacked, for instance, were Fernando Delgado ('a fat Falangist'), Benito Perojo ('interested in nothing except amassing money') and Florián Rey ('a wretch who owes all

that he has to the popular Spain that he now fights against'). Among the actresses, there was criticism directed at Imperio Argentina ('a go-getter filled with vanity'), Carmen Díaz ('a declining actress awash with rightwing vices'), Lola Membrives ('she with her snake's soul'), Raquel Meyer ('who thinks she is part of the nobility of the Montijos'), or even Concha Catalá, María Bassó, López Heredia, Eugenia Zuffoli, Conchita Piquer, Estrellita Castro and Antoñita Colomé. Finally, there were attacks on actors like Juan Landa ('a bad Basque but a peerless braggart'), Fernando Fernández de Córdoba ('the most fascist of fascistic artistes') as well as Valeriano León, Miguel Ligeró, Ramón Sentmenat, Rafael Rivelles or Fleta. In Madrid the movie *Morena Clara* (1936) was even banned because it featured Imperio Argentina and Florián Rey who were in Berlin working for the Nationalists and Nazis.



Carmen de la Triana (1938): starring Imperio Argentina as Carmen)

To give the reader some idea of the climate of violence generated by the revolution, especially in the early days, we might take the example of the position of the Paramount executives. On 26 August 1936, Paramount's director-general in Europe instructed M. J. Messeri, his manager in Barcelona, to look into the position of the company and its staff. Messeri, who had fled to France on 27 July, returned to Barcelona and drew up a lengthy report. First he spelled out the state of fear in which the staff were living and the lawlessness and lack of authority in the city (looting, armed gangs, checkpoints manned by militians, murders). Later he pointed to the fate of the directors (some of whom were abroad with others in hiding) and he stated:

'The anarchists are going to destroy everything and have their fill of killing. Irún is a pointer to what could happen in Barcelona. Are we going to sit and watch passively as tragedy draws near? Haven't these boys and girls given us their best during all the years of success that Paramount has known in this country? [...] We should do all in our power to rescue some of them, the ones most liable to be foully murdered without their having committed any offence, lest it be their perseverance in their work and their having held some

post consistent with their effort and modest ambitions.'" [36]

Now, contrary to what happened on the Nationalist side, and no matter how much the press denounced by name 'persons in Franco's service', the leftwing forces did not orchestrate systematic persecution of entertainments workers, nor did such persecution always apply to conduct prior to 18 July 1936. One instance of their less violent and sectarian approach is the generosity with which passports were issued to allow performers such as Benito Perojo, Miguel Ligeró, Estrellita Castro and many others to leave loyalist Spain and honour contracts that were soon exposed as mere pretexts upon which they might join the Nationalist camp. There were also many cases where entertainments workers and organisations offered protection to 'rebel comrades'. Thus the Entertainments Council stood out on account of the 'ease with which nearly every one of its members aided the persecuted and those recently freed from some jail, supplying them at the very least with sound work papers that allowed them to move around without fear of constant, menacing requests for documents showing that they were 'serving the cause'. [37] And the actor Julio Peña said of the movie *Los cinco advertencias de Satanás* (1937), shot in Barcelona:

'All of us looking for a refuge where we might remain beyond the clutches of the SIM [Military Intelligence Service] wound up there. It afforded us some cash but above all papers with which we could move around and, as result, enjoy the chance of some peace of mind.' [38]

Furthermore, protection was knowingly extended to those who in many instances were engaged in counter-revolutionary activities. For instance, Fernando Méndez-Leite recalled that many in the trade 'infiltrated the ranks of the red trade unions in search of the protection of a union card, initially, and with an eye to sabotaging the aims of the un-

disaffected later materially or morally by means of secret action or creating hindrances. Thus, *Nuestro Culpable* (1938) served 'to furnish a union card to many persecuted actors by way of a defensive weapon.' [39] For his part, Francisco Elías accepted the post of artistic director from the 2nd Production Committee at SIE Films at the same time as he joined an

*La toma de
Siétamo: 1936*



underground Falange group made up of theatre folk and film folk. One of its members, actor Pedro Larrañaga, was arrested in connection with this activity.

Of course the anarchists were aware of all this. The newspaper *CNT* said of certain people in the trade:

‘Some lie in waiting in their lairs abroad while others await developments so as to determine what way the wind is blowing before their throw out an arm or clench a fist.’ [40]

Likewise, the CNT’s Political-Social Branch discerned, especially towards the end of the war, that the Madrid fifth column included lots of performers and ‘girls’ from public entertainments who were fraternising with army officers in order to extract information from them or distract them from their front line missions. Among the performers accused at some time of operating as spies were Enrique del Campo, Fernanda Ladrón de Guevara, Victoria del Mar, Tina de Jarque (who was to be shot for her pains) and Celia Gómez (who escaped before she could be arrested).

The anarchists put up with this state of affairs — not merely because they were promoting a more humane approach or because they were hoping for similar treatment in the event that they might lose the war, but primarily because they needed these people to keep the economy going. The revolution had been child’s play in terms of gaining the upper hand over capital physically and financially, but gaining control of human capital proved much more complicated. On the one hand, anarchist militants’ greenhorn status led to their shooting unscreenable films. On the other, leftwing professionals were not always available, in that they preferred other organisations or indeed plumped for easier options outside Spain and there were those indeed who suggested that the dearth of professionals be compensated for by hiring foreign directors with backgrounds in social cinema, people of the calibre of G.W. Pabst, Jacques Feyder, René Clair or King Vidor. In other words, the anarchists had to fall back on technicians and performers who were barely libertarians (if at all) and had the potential to either infect their films with bourgeois aims or pretend to be working when in fact they were boycotting production. [41]

Armand Guerra, of whom we have already spoken, was a very different kettle of fish. After filming a number of movies, Guerra was assigned to the CNT’s propaganda and

intelligence services. These activities earned him the enmity of the communists and he was detained by the SIM. In a cheka in Valencia where he was held for 124 days, he was interrogated and subjected to torture. We do not know the details, but he managed to escape and made his way to France. Shortly after that, on 10 March 1939, he died in Paris of a stroke somehow brought on by his time in that cheka.

Finally, with the war over it was the anarchist entertainment workers or those who worked with them who were subject to Francoist repression. Some faced the firing squad like the journalist-cum-film-maker Carrasco de la Rubia: others served years in prison like Juan Saña: some were downgraded in the profession or had to work uncredited, like the director Antonio Sau: and most were forced into exile like Marcos Alcón, Miguel Espinar, Les, Mateo Santos, Jacinto Toryho, Silvia Mistral, Manuel P. de la Somacerrara, etc.

The power of Hollywood and the Anarchist film canon

Before the war, the anarchist writer José Peirats penned a pamphlet entitled *Para una concepción social del arte: lo que podría ser un cinema social* (Barcelona, *La Revista Blanca*, 1935?). Peirats rails against the bourgeois or Hollywood style of film on the grounds that it is frivolous and perverse, as well as being the product of an industry that encourages man's exploitation of his fellow man. Likewise, he attacks Nazi and fascist filmmakers for using the State to turn movies into a weapon against peace, culture and the freedom of peoples. Nor does he spare the Soviet film-makers. Despite its unquestionable artistic merit, Soviet filmmaking is full of rabble-rousing, deifying the masses just as Hollywood deifies its stars—and subject to the sort of censorship of which any fascist State would be proud. On the other hand, he offers a list of films which, though not anarchist, mirror a way of life advocated by anarchism: there is the paean to freedom of the individual to be found in Clair's *A nous la liberté* (1931), the pacifism of G. W. Pabst's *Kamaradschaft* (1931) and Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), and the celebration of sexual freedom in Gustav Machaty's *Ekstase* (1932).

During the civil war, it was reasonable to expect that a socialised cinema would change its programmes along the lines signalled by Peirats. But this was not the case. On the

one hand, the film-makers of SIE and from the libertarian movement as a whole could supply only a tiny fraction of the movies that Spanish cinemas needed. Moreover, the cinema-owners, such as the Cinemas Economic Committee, reckoned that if socialisation was to survive their schedules should not disappoint audiences. In other words, most audiences looked to the movies for dreams and escape, whether in terms of the beauty and sex-appeal of the cast, the lavish decor, the fantastic plots, the exaggerated passion, the happy endings, the musical backdrop, the ability to recreate history or indeed the depiction of the most far flung countries and landscapes. Ironically enough, the Hollywood movie continued to dominate the schedules and was the winning formula under the revolution. What is more, it was the box office receipts from this sort of movie that sustained the socialisation arrangement devised by the anarchists.

This explains why some 80 per cent of the 69 films screened in Barcelona during the 1936-1937 season were US productions from the likes of Warner, MGM, Columbia, Paramount, Universal, Fox, United Artists and RKO Films. Spanish-produced movies accounted for just seven per cent and these included *El amor gitano* (1936), a schmaltzy film by Alfonso Benavides: Armando Vidal's film *Los héroes del barrio* (1936), a tale of street urchins; and two directed by Salvador Alberich on behalf of the producer and ex-parliamentarian Daniel Mangrané, *Nuevos ideales* (1936), an unusual examination of the class struggle in Spain and *El deber* (1936). Now, while the Spanish films may have been few in number, they registered significant successes. *El deber* was retained for two weeks and *Los héroes del barrio*, which is usually regarded as having been screened after the war, was in fact one of the biggest hits of the season, being the only movie retained for three weeks. The remainder of the best-selling films were, as I say, US films and pure escapism: *Captain Blood* (1936), melodramas like *The Dark Angel* (1935) and *Wife vs Secretary* (1936), or comedies like *Strike Me Pink* (1935), featuring Eddie Cantor and *The Bohemian Girl* (1936) featuring Laurel and Hardy.

In addition to this line-up in Barcelona's commercial movie theatres (greatly criticised by the rest of the Popular Front forces and by some spectators who voiced loud protests in the cinemas) there were other, more cautious anarchist

programmers more inclined, as Peirats had urged, to seek out films among the existing commercial output of Spain that fitted their anarchist ideals. These programmers drew up a list of more or less suitable films in terms of form and content, ie. they created a catalogue of recommended viewing: an anarchist canon, a model for their own film-making.

For instance, the list drawn up by Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista (SIA) enabled the organisation and its local branches to screen suitable films at benefits and political meetings organised for fund-raising purposes. In fact, given that the SIA was keen to fight shy of undue partisanship in that this might damage its fund-raising efforts, the list included films that were more antifascist (and even Soviet) than anarchist. And as I said before, most were drawn from the available commercial catalogue, meaning that, this time, 60 per cent of the titles picked out were Hollywood films. Now, the choice of US films had to do not only with market control considerations, but also the fact that just then Hollywood also stood for a progressive, socially conscious film-making that went down very well with the left in Europe. Furthermore, when Miguel Espinar referred to the sort of films that the SIE Films would like to produce, he cited US films like *I Was A Fugitive From a Chain Gang* (1932), *Seed* (1932) or *Mr Deeds Goes To Town* (1936).

As for content, the greater number of the films picked out by the SIA list focus on revolutionary movements or situations: *Mutiny On The Bounty* (1935), *La Marseillaise* (1937), *Les Misérables* (1935), *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *Putevka v Zizn* (1931), *The Kronstadt Sailors* (1936), *Pancho Villa* (1934), *Metropolis* (1926), or *Our Daily Bread* (1934). A second batch of films denounced exploitative situations or regimes, like *Rasputin And The Empress* (1932), *Live Again* (1934), *Kamaradschaft* (1932) and *So ist das Leben* (1929). There were also plenty of films dealing with the role of woman and the family, like *Sweepings* (1933), *Anna Karenina* (1935), *Ekstase* (1932), *Grand Hotel* (1932) and *Break of Hearts* (1935). There were also representations of literature such as *El Cristo Moderno* (?), homages to naturism and nature like *Eskimo* and *The Call of the Wild* (1935). Finally, there were films about scientific or pseudo-scientific subjects like *The Man Who Changed His Mind*

(1936) or *The Story of Louis Pasteur*(1936) [42]

Notes

1. Román Gubern, *El cine sonoro en la Segunda República (1929-1936)*, (Barcelona, Limen, 1977), pp. 184 et seq.
2. See José María Claver Esteban, *El cine en Aragón durante la Guerra Civil*, (Zaragoza, Ayuntamiento, 1997)
3. Socialisation there took place on 24 August 1936 and affected the following premises: the Teatro Municipal, the Cine-Teatro Albéniz, the Salón Gran Vía (later renamed the Salón Durruti) and the Sala Coliseo Imperial (renamed the Bakunin). The first of these staged plays and the rest were movie theatres. These premises created enough work to support 60 families whereas prior to the war most of them had had to supplement their work in entertainments with other jobs.
4. The anarchists there seized eight premises. Creating work for 35 professionals, later expanding to a further 45.
5. The take-over here affected three premises and created 22 jobs.
6. Here the socialisation affected three premises: the Teatro Principal, the Teatro Calderón and the Teatro Circo. The last two belonged to the mutual aid societies which would lease them out to private individuals, using the rental income to support the needs of the elderly and sick. The anarchists dismissed the businessmen tenants but increased payments to the mutual aid societies by 100 per cent while raising the pay of the 57 local workers dependent on the entertainments sector, from 2.25 pesetas a day to a minimum wage of 8.60. All of this while cutting ticket prices: in the cinemas, from 1.25 pesetas to 0.75 pesetas; in the theatre, from five pesetas down to 2.50 pesetas per seat. This revolutionary change was overseen by Jaime Giner (chairman of the Board of Administration), Francisco Pi (technical secretary), Adolfo Espí (treasurer) and board members Pascual Ortega and Rafael Martí.
7. In Málaga socialisation was introduced in November 1936, affecting eleven premises and was implemented in partnership with the UGT's Society of Public Entertainments Employees. See José María Claver Esteban, *El cine en Andalucía durante la Guerra Civil*, (Fundación Blas Infante, 2000), Vol. II, p. 125 ff.
8. See Carlos Fernández Cuenca, *La guerra de España en la pantalla*, (Madrid, Editora Nacional, 1972), p. 81

9. **Jesús Hernández**, *Negro y rojo: los anarquistas en la revolución española*, (Mexico, *La España Contemporánea*, 1946), pp. 186-187
10. **Carrasco de la Rubia** 'Nuevos rumbos del cinema española' in *Umbral* No 6, 14 July 1937, p. 13
11. According to Fernández Cuenca (op. cit. p. 823) the CNT's fim-makers produced an anarchist newsreel entitled *España Gráfica* from October 1936 over a two year period (1936-1938).
12. 'La labor del Comité Económico de Cines' in *Mi Revista*, No 31, 10 January 1938
13. National History Archives, Salamamca, PS Barcelona, 1.085, 4 July 1937. Another document from the same file (and dated June 19378) speaks of 44 productions. And the review *Espectáculo* issue No.1 of 10 July 1937 mentions 43 productions.
14. **Enrique Gómez**, 'Los que hacen cinema' in *Umbral*, 28 August 1937, p. 8
15. **Mateo Santos**, *Un ensayo de teatro experimental* (Caspe, Ediciones de la Consejería de Información y Propaganda de Aragón, 1937, pp. 40 and 41). The images in question may well relate to the films of the same name that Juan Mariné dates to 1936 and which are listed in No 852 of **Alfonso del Amo** (editor) *Catalógo General del Cine de la Guerra Civil*, (Madrid, Cátedra/Filmoteca Española 1996)
16. **Carlos Fernández Cuenca**, op. cit., p. 129. **Ramón Sala**, *El cine en la España republicana durante la Guerra Civil* (Bilbao, Mensajero 1993, p. 83
17. *Espectáculo* No 1, 10 July 1937, p.1
18. 'Nuestro movimiento confederal' in *Espectáculo* No 5, 15 September 1937
19. Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo. Circular No 2 from the FNIEPE. CNT National Committee Archive 40AJ1, 7 September 1937, p. 4
20. **Ramón Sala**, op. cit., p. 95
21. **Carrasco de la Rubia** 'Nuevos rumbos del cinema españols' in *Umbral* No 6, 14 July 1937, p. 13
22. **Gil Bel**, *Responsabilidades de una industria' in Espectáculo* No 2, 30 August 1937.
23. National History Archive, Salamanca, PS Barcelona 1.421.23 April 1938
24. Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo, CNT National Committee Archive, 38C, 7 December 1938

25. José Iglesias, *Informe-Memoria de la Industria de Espectáculos Públicos de Madrid*, (Madrid, CNT, December 1937), p. 21
26. José Alted, 'A la Federación Local de la Industria de Espectáculos Públicos UGT' in *Castilla Libre*, 10 February 1937, p. 2
27. Lázaro Díaz, 'Actividades cinematográficas del Sindicato Unico de Espectáculos del Centro' in *Blanco y Negro*, November 1938, p. 19
28. Here we are going by the testimony left behind in a ten-page manuscript by A. Polo and made available to us by Julio Pérez Perucha
29. Also known as Fortificadores de Madrid or Batallón de fortificadores
30. This may well be the same film decribed in Alfonso del Amo (ed.) op. cit., 1996 as *A los dos años*.
31. The most important of these four films was *Amanecer sobre España*, a film shot with particular attention to the SIA's campaigns abroad; hence the making of French- and English-language versions. For instance, *Amanecer sobre España*, together with *Aurora de Esperanza* and speeches by anarchist leaders were screened during an SIA tour of France. The director and scriptwriter for the film was Louis Frank, an American sympathiser who, in 1937, had filmed *Fury Over Spain*, another film made for propaganda purposes and screened in London with the aid of the anarchist leader Emma Goldman. Likewise, and along the same lines, we should also cite *A Call To Arms* (1937) and *Crime Against Madrid* (1937), the latter partly a re-cut version of the former; these were circulated in Great Britain. See Alfonso del Amo (ed.), op.cit., 1996, p. 260. The same *Catalogue* (pp. 149 and 552) also credits the SIA with the movies *Ayuda a Madrid. Homenaje a Durruti* (1937) and *Hoy hace un año* (1937). On the other hand, the SIA only acknowledges the four films named as its own. Maybe the other two were screened at SIA rallies, albeit without their being financed by that organisation, being financed instead by the Valencia SUEP where Manuel Ordóñez de Barricua, who directed both these films for the anarchists as well as *Tres puntos de lucha* (1937), was working.
32. Les 'Hora del Cinema. El celuloíde espera' in *Umbral*, 26 November 1938.

33. Specifically, the film library contains 60 films categorised under eight headings: cartoon animations like *Bufones antiguas* and *Exposición canina*; comedy films like *Un día en la Tierra*; general cultural films such as *Ruta de Don Quijote* or *Sinfonía del agua*; newsreels like *Sed bienvenidos. Niños españoles a URSS (Dobrá pozhálovath, 1937)* and *Nuevos amigos. Niños españoles en la URSS (Nóvie Tovarisch, 1937)*: air force and sports films like *Arte del vuelo sin motor*: cities, monuments and countryside films like *Salamanca* or *En el país de los bretones*: natural history films like *Plantas carnívoras*: and science, engineering and industrial movies like the four-part *Motor de explosión*.
34. Family archive of E. Lluch, cited by Juan Aguilera Sastre 'Felipe Lluch, artifice e iniciador del Teatro Nacional' in *Various, Historia de los Teatros Nacionales (1939-1962)* (Madrid, CDT, 1993, pp. 51-52)
35. Archivo general de la Administración, Sección de Exteriores, 'Ofensiva Régimen Español (1946-1952)', Box 3, 318, 1947
36. Archivo general de la Administración, Sección Cultura, Box 1, 14 September 1936.
37. Carlos Fernández Cuenca, op. cit. p. 85
38. Julio Peña, *Mi vida* (Madrid, Astros, 1942), pp 23-24)
39. Fernando Méndez-Leite, *Historia del cine español* (Rialp, Madrid 1965,) pp. 382 and 384
40. José García 'Cinematografía y Mangancia' in *CNT*, 4 February 1937, p. 2
41. Francisco Agramunt 'Armand Guerra, Agente Secreto' *En domingo*, 30 December 2001, p. 7
42. Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo, CNT National Committee Archives, Batch 111F. This list also includes some 'taboo' films (taboo insofar as they were screened so that their contents might be denounced), Thus *El Agente Británico (The British Agent, 1937)*, *Tres lanceros bengales (Lives of a Bengal Lancer, 1935)* were used to denounce imperialism while the Nazi movie *El despertar de una nación* (SA Mann Brand, 1933) was an exposé, from within, of the dangers of totalitarianism.

BLOCKED BRAIN?

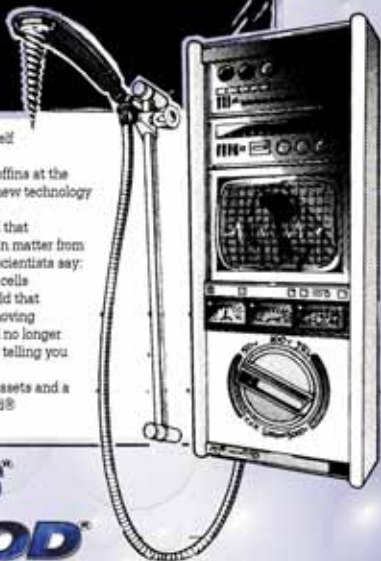


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FREE ELECTIONS
and **DEMOCRACY**

are in fact, a **SHAM**.

Nothing more than a

MASK to cover the

coercive acts of

smooth-talking grease-balls.



**War is much more
fun when you are
winning.**

(General Martok)

*Fear of starvation amid
plenty - what could such a
thing denote?*

***NOW is the time
to Inventorise
your middle-class
life-style
Accessories***



*Aid is money taken from the taxation of the
poor of the rich world, and given to the rich
of the poor world, who then repay it to the
rich of the rich world.*

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Look too hard at the stars and
you will trample the flowers.
Look too hard at the flowers and
you will walk into a tree.
(*Sigismund Rhomboid*)

**Those who are convinced
they are on the side of the
angels make very bad
hosts.**

**YOU CANNOT
CONQUER AN IDEA
WITH AN ARMY**

(*Thomas Payne*)

**Let us now synergise
with excellencel**
(*Drop the Dead Donkey*)

BEWARE!

AFFLUENZA

VIRUS ALERT



**CHECK OUT
THE SYMPTOMS**

Obsessive about
acquiring possessions

Admiration of
B-grade celebs

Obedience
to one's Masters

Patient
Keeps nodding



ARANDA'S *LIBERTARIAS* WOMEN AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR THROUGH A DISTORTED LENS

Andrew H. Lee

In July 1936, Spanish Army units in Morocco rebelled against the elected government, starting the Spanish Civil War. As a result of the widespread mythology of the revolutionary strike, and following the widely known historical examples of the Paris Commune, Saint Petersburg, Berlin and the recent events in Vienna and Asturias, people took to the streets to oppose the revolt. The resistance was based in the popular mass organizations including trade unions, the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), and other organizations of the Left, sometimes fighting against military units, sometimes alongside them. The uprising acted as the catalyst for a

social revolution, it 'hastened the revolution we all desired, but no one had expected so soon' remarked Federica Montseny, a leading anarchist militant. One of the most surprising and unsettling aspects of the popular revolution was the immediate assertion by women of both equality and their consequent assumption of what had been traditionally masculine prerogatives, most notably the right to participate in armed struggle to defend the revolution. One of the leading women's groups during the Civil War was the anarchist organization *Mujeres Libres*, devoted to the





Sarah Guillén,
Mujeres Libres
militant
interviewed in
De toda la vida.

liberation of women and their empowerment and assumption of their rightful place in a free society.

Mujeres Libres was founded in the spring of 1936 in order to work on the second revolution, the gender revolution that was needed in order for the social revolution to triumph. Mujeres Libres was never officially part of the libertarian movement and had to struggle for recognition and resources. For most on the Left, the

woman's question was seen as secondary to the social revolution as it would be solved by the social revolution. Mujeres Libres organized chapters and struggled to win this dual revolution. Two films, *De toda la vida* (1986) and *Libertarias* (1996), sought to tell the story of the Mujeres Libres and together they illustrate some of the issues of narrating the history of anarchism through film.

De toda la vida is a documentary by two young American filmmakers, using the traditional interview format, with contemporary photographs. It presents the moving and passionate history of anarchist women, many in the Mujeres Libres, through the poignant recollections and histories as told by the women themselves. In less than an hour the viewer learns the history of the social revolution and women's role in it, the changes wrought by the war, and the struggles of these valiant women for an independent role in society. It does not neglect the important fact that these women fought for social change well before the war, opening with a woman describing how wearing pants was the cause of her being thrown out of her family. Both the ideal of anarchism and its cultural institutions in Spain clearly impact the actual daily experience of the ideology. This is documentary film making at its best because we learn not only about the subjects and their times, but also we understand the reasons why they are anarchists. The film's title is doubly appropriate, these women have been anarchists all their lives, both in the years they have lived and in their daily practice. The experience is clearly a total one, anarchism inflects all their life and their experiences bear witness to this.

Ten years later a major commercial film also attempted to tell the story of anarchist women. *Libertarias*, directed by Vicente Aranda, focuses on those women who went to the

front. Aranda shows that the Civil War was not a conflict simply limited to the men, but also involved women. Thus it depicts the social revolution in its gender aspects and presents an image of the first months of the Civil War. Despite its cinematic flair, it's unfortunate that the film almost completely misses the mark in its portrayal of the *Mujeres Libres*. Rather than engage the ideology and actions of these women and the revolution in gender relations on the Republican side, Aranda's film makes real the very arguments, chauvinism, and fears that defeated the revolution in gender relations. His sexualization and exoticization of his female characters falls back upon the very stereotypes against which the *Mujeres Libres* fought.

Opening with the sacking of a church the audience sees the film's central protagonist, María (Ariadna Gil), a young novitiate. The Mother Superior presents her to the viewer as innocent, naive, and pure. In her innocence, María takes refuge from the mob in a bordello that is soon 'liberated' by members of *Mujeres Libres*. María then attaches herself to the leading miliciana, Pilar (Ana Belén), and goes to Barcelona with the *Mujeres Libres*. There she meets Floren (Victoria Abril), a club-footed, anarchist, spiritualist bookseller. The first portion of the film is driven by scenes of revolutionary euphoria and debate. In one scene the women, joined by one of the former prostitutes, Charo (Loles León), debate the role of women in the revolution. The women then depart for the Aragón front, where combat and struggle — personal as well as political, take up the final hour of the film. At the front they are in a stalemate with the enemy across a ravine, shouting propaganda and insults back and forth, and occasionally a bullet. While they do lead a successful assault on a town and carry the enemy trenches, the focus of the film is not on combat but on the women. The most brutal scene in the film is the penultimate one, when the unit is overrun by Moroccan mercenaries. The film ends with María, rescued from the mercenaries, in a prison with a dying Pilar.

The film was Aranda's ostensible tribute to the struggle of *Mujeres Libres*. The film is beautiful, and the fact that it had



María the novitiate nun played by Ariadna Gil in *Libertarias*



Ana Belén who plays the *Mujeres Libres* militant Pilar in *Libertarias*



Scene from *Libertarias* where the *Mujeres Libres* close the brothel and tell the prostitutes they are free to go



several of Spain's top actresses obviously helped make it a box-office success. He does not seriously engage with anarchism as an ideology but merely as a colorful backdrop and catch-all for explaining certain actions, or in the case of the front, inaction. Some of the more radical stereotypes are used including incendiary anticlericalism and sexual libertarianism. Despite being the focus of the film, the six women are cardboard characters, frequently used as objects by Aranda.

Anticlericalism was widespread in the Republican area, and included the sacking of churches, iconoclasm, and the murder of priests and nuns. *Libertarias* does show the looting of a church, a cinematically beautiful burning of objects, and the execution of a priest but this is unexplained. Anticlericalism was an important element of the anarchist

Maria (Ariadna Gil) and Pilar (Ana Belén) watch the burning of religious icons and property deeds movement, but the only character who addresses it in any way is the spiritualist Floren, who also tells María that indeed Jesus existed and he was a woman. This view is not representative of anarchist anticlericalism, and while it is impossible to prove that view did not exist, I have never read any Spanish anarchist publications making such a claim. Aranda himself engages in a safe anticlericalism, the anticlericalism of priests as lechers. There is both a priest at the beginning of the film, who is soon shot, and a priest in the second part of the film, a member of the anarchist militia who lusts after María.

This priest is the erstwhile male romantic lead, and although María ultimately rejects him, she does have several significant scenes with him and clearly looks at him with discernible longing. A priest did serve as an aide to the anarchist leader Durruti (and even more amazingly after the war continued to be a priest). Floren remarks to María upon observing María's interest in him that once a priest, always a priest. Yet these fiercely anticlerical women accept María without hesitation, gleefully introducing her to a North American reporter as a nun. In a scene before the brutal capture of María, the crowd is shown tearing down the cross on a pedestal in the plaza and celebrating its destruction. When the Nationalists have recaptured both the town and María, the first thing we see them do is return a new cross to its position of prominence in

the same spot.

This is in contrast to the scene in Loach's *Land and Freedom* where anticlericalism is incidental yet explained by the priest shooting at the militia from his bell tower. When the priest is captured with a rifle and the marks on his shoulder to prove his firing, he is shot. Aranda's

anticlericalism is much more important but also much more muddled and unexplained and as a consequence, irrational. What better way to underscore this treatment by having a spiritualist be the most articulate. In what one English language commentator saw as a comedic scene that is a send up of Linda Blair in *The Exorcist*, Floren goes into a trance in

the trenches where, speaking in a harsh guttural voice, she claims to be the famous regicide Mateo Morral and makes some frightening forecasts. (In another historical error she also states as Morral she was garroted whereas in reality he committed suicide rather than be captured.) By making Floren the most ideological and as a bookseller, the most intellectual, spokesperson for anarchism, Aranda is also diminishing the real ideological attraction of anarchism. By having it consciously and openly become intertwined with the Catholicism of María he is also falling back on the argument that anarchism is a religious belief. In fact, Aranda espouses this view through the North America reporter when he interviews the women. Anarchism is not in *Libertarias* an ideology that attracted adherents but rather — and certainly for María — a substitution for Catholic religious faith.

The women were often treated as, at best, nuisances, and, at worst, sexual distractions from winning the war. They are neglecting their natural maternal duties and failing to support the men. Aranda does show that this debate was not limited to the men in positions of power, but also among the women. The day after arriving in Barcelona the women attend a meeting of the *Mujeres Libres* in Barcelona and walk into a debate where the assembled women are being told by a woman (who physically resembles Federica Montseny) to leave the fighting to the men. She is opposed in a fierce and



Victoria Abril as Floren



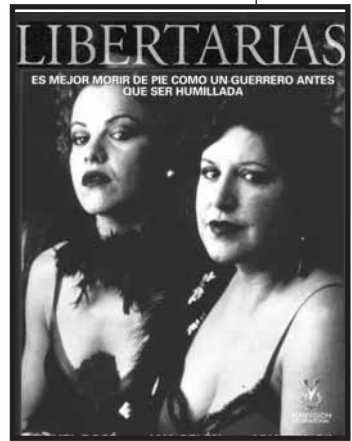
impassioned speech by Pilar, who declares that they want to live and fight with the men, that they want to make the revolution and not live as servants. They want to fight so that the revolution is as much theirs as the men's, and in so doing shape the future. The Spanish film historian Magi Crusells points out that, for the women in *Libertarias*, the rifle represents not only the power they believe they have seized but also the ability to implement their ideals, and the chance to fight for these against the enemy. This enemy may also be those in the movement who do not recognize that women are, as Pilar defiantly shouts at the North American journalist, equivalent to men, not equal. This is in keeping with Mujeres Libres activities and ideology, and their actions in trying to improve the lot of women through a mental revolution as well. Immediately after her speech at the Mujeres Libres meeting, Pilar goes off to Aragón with the others.

At the front, some of the men are more interested in groping than fighting. In fact, Aranda's film falls back upon the stereotype of women at the front: they are whores. Of the women at the front, four were Mujeres Libres, including Pilar and Floren, María, and the former prostitute Charo. She is the hackneyed and clichéd whore with a heart of gold, who has a child, who joins the women in Mujeres Libres after hearing the speeches and deciding she wants to be liberated. The actual Mujeres Libres worked a great deal on prostitution, trying to provide routes out of what was viewed as sexual slavery and oppression and made a great deal of propaganda in order to make people aware of the horrible toll that prostitution exerted on women. The closing of the bordello, the abuse of the madam, and the trooping of the women are all entirely believable. But what is not believable is the role that Charo plays. She introduces herself as a whore to the North American reporter, who seems less taken aback by this than by the statement that María is a nun. And of course, of the six women who are in the trenches, it is Charo who has sex with one of the militiamen. During one night only two men and three women (Charo, María and Floren) remain in the trench. Charo is outside talking to one of the men as the others are inside the dugout. After his rhapsodizing about another woman she opens her blouse exposing her breasts and in effect asks 'Are these enough' and he greedily latches on. The others are shown hearing them pant, and María moves away from the dugout's opening so as to escape the sounds. The scene switches back

to the outside and the man complains about being asked a question while 'fucking', and he has Charo pinned against a solitary post using his rifle to brace himself inside her (and symbolically crucifying her). Lest there be any doubt, they are then depicted the next morning being woken by Floren, while lying in a bed together. Throughout this sexual encounter Charo is impassive and bored. The central critique during the Civil War on women at the front was that the only reason any woman would want to be at the very front lines was to engage in prostitution and thus they were a serious distraction for the men. Prostitutes were accused of being more deadly than the enemy's bullets, and several organizations issued posters against prostitution and warning that they may be spies. Charo's actions would seem to bear this out, there is no romance or love but pure carnality, so that when Durruti orders the priest to send the women back, the viewer is not surprised. Aranda does not really deal with this aspect of the war and the experience of libertarian women at the front. The closest he comes is when he depicts the entire unit resisting having the women sent back by greeting the priest with weapons cocked and in positions of strength for a fight, stating brazenly that there are no women to be sent back. When the priest points to the six of them, asking what are those, the leader of the group states that they are not women but fighters, combatants. The priest smiles, turns around, and leaves with his truck empty.

Ariadna Gil is so completely naïve as María that one wonders why she is the central protagonist of the film. She leaves one mother surrogate — the mother superior — only to quickly and without explanation replace her with another surrogate, Pilar. She is so innocent that she chases after Pilar and begs her not to leave her when Pilar picks up an American journalist that Aranda said was modeled after Ernest Hemingway, but is probably closer to a reporter for a Canadian newspaper, the journalist Pierre van Passen, who interviewed Durruti. Dropped by Pilar, instead he goes off with Floren, which becomes significant at the end of the film.

The penultimate scene of the film is the most troubling. Aranda has the entire unit brutally massacred by Moroccan troops in what must be described as a bloody mass rape. One moment the women are sitting around listening to Charo read from a letter from her child and a couple of the militiamen



Publicity image for the film *Libertarias* which includes on the right the actress Loles León as Charo.

walk up with a sheep for their meal. The sheep needs to be slaughtered and María is squeamish and goes inside a hut to avoid the cutting of its throat, instead what she hears after the bleat of the lamb is more guttural sounds and she cautiously crawls towards a window where she finds Charo's hands grasping on the grate as her throat is slit. She stumbles to the doorway of the hut where Floren is struggling with a Moor's

Dolores Prat
interviewed in
De Toda la Vida



knife as he tries to stab her from behind, blood is running on the ground and her hands are being sliced as he overpowers her and stabs her. Thus the two women in the film who have sex are both bloodily and brutally slain by knives, an obvious phallic symbol — almost too obvious. All these women are taken from behind, are brutally savaged, and then as Maria crawls into a corner praying, the Moors seize her and strip her pants off, holding her like a wheelbarrow. These men are either raping

her, or preparing to, when a Spanish officer comes in and chases them off when he sees Maria's religious medals and hears her praying. The sadism and misogyny are compounded by a racist component that involves having the rape done by Moors — especially since the Aragón Front at this period did



not have any Moroccan troops. While there are several examples of gratuitous use of Maria's body for voyeurism, this is the worst: it is sadistic, racist, and adds nothing to the story. Aranda seems to be unable to leave sexuality behind.

The next scene is Maria, a prisoner in the hands of the enemy, meeting with a priest and refusing to speak, so she is sent off with

Anarchists the other prisoners. In the cells where they are being held, Federica Maria finds a dying Pilar and makes a final prayer. She, the one Montseny, who was pure, who resisted sexual temptation, and remained María Batet, innocent, is the one who survived. He makes use of some of the traditional stereotypes from the war and ostensibly uses Prat being them to advance a democratic message, but at the same time interviewed for he reinforces many of the historical myths that became the *Toda la Vida* official reasons that Franco fought. Despite Aranda's stated intentions, *Libertarias* does not pay an appropriate homage to those brave women who fought for liberty in Spain whereas *De toda la vida* does.

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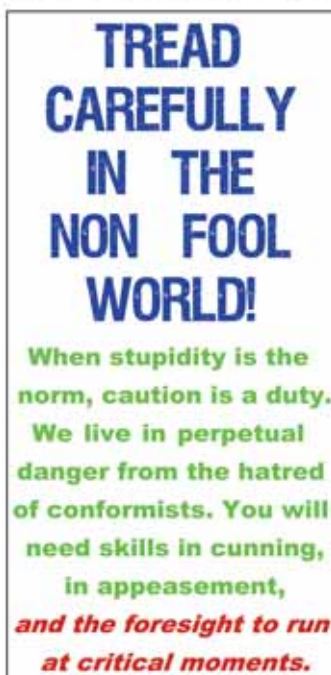
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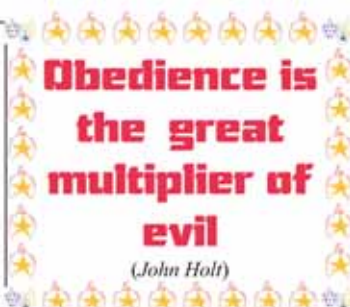
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...AND BEHOLD A PALE HORSE AND HIS NAME WHO SAT ON HIM WAS 'ALEXANDER'

Dan Georgakas

Theo Angelopoulos has never identified himself as an anarchist, only as a filmmaker with a commitment to democracy and a disdain for political borders. Nonetheless, his *Alexander the Great* (*O Megalexandros*, 1980) is an engaging example of a cinematic rendering of the anarchist perspective in both form and content. His attempt in this film to seamlessly join history, myth, and current events with a healthy denunciation of all things authoritarian is unique in Greek cinema and virtually stands alone in the handful of films that deal with anarchist subject matter.



Theo
Angelopoulos

From the time Angelopoulos made *Anaparastasi* (*Reconstruction*, 1970), his first feature film, he has stated that if people are to think differently they must literally learn to see differently. This insistence that challenging political ideas must be presented in a challenging form is in sharp contrast to the position espoused by filmmakers such as Costa Gavras who believe that popular formats can be appropriated for revolutionary political content, a proposition Gavras first successfully explored in *Z* (1969). Angelopoulos believes that such an approach, while offering easier access to a mass audience, takes the risk that its conventional format may neuter its revolutionary content.

Alexander the Great follows *Days of '36* (*Meres Tou '36*, 1972), *The Traveling Players* (*O Thiasos*, 1975), and *The Hunters* (*I Kinighi*, 1977), a film trilogy that revised the official history of Greece during the World War II era in formats antithetical to popular cinema. *Days of '36*, which was hailed by critics as a new departure for Greek cinema, had a respectable number of admissions in Greece and abroad. *The Traveling Players*, however, was a domestic and international



O Megalexandros triumph, setting new contemporary domestic attendance records and putting Greek cinema back on the international map. Many critics have subsequently cited it as one of the most important films of the later half of the twentieth century, and it is universally considered the masterwork of the New Greek Cinema. *The Hunters* did not achieve the same acclaim, but it attracted a respectable domestic and international audience. With *Alexander the Great*, Angelopoulos upped the cinematic and political stakes by shifting from specific historical events to take on national mythology with techniques that were even more demanding than in his previous films.

A New Political Perspective

The film's title is easily misunderstood. The great Alexander to be examined is not the famed conqueror of ancient times or the messianic Alexander of Byzantium, a hero expected to appear whenever the empire was in mortal danger. Nevertheless, Angelopoulos suggests subtle cultural continuities, echoes, and memories that span centuries. The most blatant of these is a long sequence about the selection of Alexander's horse that resonates with legends regarding the

historical Alexander's steed. In like manner, numerous tableaux, color schemes, and other esthetics choices evoke Byzantine culture.

The film's Alexander is a revolutionary brigand active at the turn of the twentieth century. Although no national revolutionary movement was in progress at Greece at that time, like Kolokotronis, a famed hero of the war of independence, the film's Alexander wears an ancient helmet to remind his followers of their classic heritage. Yet another complication of the Alexander myth is that during the film when Alexander re-enters his village, a song normally dedicated to St. George celebrates him as a dragon slayer. .

The narrative begins at the onset of a new century with the lights coming on at a New Year's Eve ball at the royal palace. Juxtaposed to this scene is a prison escape by the bandit/patriot Alexander (Omero Antonutti) and his cohorts. Commanding a great white stallion no one else dares to mount and his shoulders draped with a traditional robe, the helmeted Alexander leads his men to Cape Sounion where they come upon a group of English lords who are sightseeing. The brigands kidnap the aristocrats and inform the palace that the Englishmen will not be released until wealthy landowners in their home district deed property rights to the local farmers and the bandit rebels are given



amnesty for their crimes. While this proposal is being considered, Alexander rides toward his mountain stronghold.

His journey proceeds slowly with little dialog. Most of the scenes are held for long periods of real time with few close-ups, an expository style suggestive of long-winded story telling in a coffeehouse. Alexander and his group move so slowly they sometimes appear to be motionless. The mood is broken when one of Alexander's men directs his gaze to the valley below and the camera unhurriedly pans to a faraway bridge where five strangers are vigorously waving black and red flags. The travelers prove to be Italian anarchists who inform Alexander that his home village has become a revolutionary commune.

Arriving at his village, Alexander discovers that all the old property values have been abolished in favor of a totally egalitarian society. The village schoolteacher (Grigoris Evanghelatos), the leading ideologue of this revolutionary change, and farmers from the commune inform the anarchists that all decisions are now made through democratic voting and everyone in the village has the franchise. A village woman plays a prominent role in explaining the details of the new social order. To join the commune, the newcomers must swear allegiance to its egalitarian principles. The Italians, four men and a woman, do so joyfully.

The Greek villagers celebrate the arrival of the Italians with a feast at which their new comrades sing lively ballads. The coloring of the clothes and the music is carefree. This festive mood is shattered when Alexander's men enter the hall. Dressed in forbidding black robes and carrying rifles, they dance a menacing warrior dance, angrily stomping their feet and raising their rifles in a hostile manner. The warriors are not pleased with the new society established in their absence. They demand individual ownership of land and animals. They want to rule their wives as they have always ruled them, and they view the Italians as parasites. Fueling their righteousness is the belief that they have earned the right to set the social agenda by having risked their lives in combat and having served prison terms. As the tension between villagers and warriors grows, a royalist military force approaches.

Political differences lead to bloodshed when the royalist commander promises Alexander various rewards if the crisis works out favourably to the government. Alexander obligingly orders the death of the Italians and the leaders of the



commune. When the government reneges on its secret pledges, an enraged Alexander responds by killing the English nobles as well. The royalist army then moves forward to crush what remains of the rebellion. As in formal Greek tragedy, the killing is done offstage and the lamenting onstage, often with massed voices reminiscent of a Greek chorus.

Adding considerable credibility to scenes imbued with mythology and abstract politics is the village setting. Rather than sunny white villages set against Mediterranean blue that are the focus of travel posters, Angelopoulos presents the historic poverty of rural mainland Greece. The specific location, the village of Dotsiko, in Greek Macedonia, was carefully chosen by Angelopoulos. But the director left nothing to chance, arranging to have the village virtually rebuilt by set designer Mikis Karapiperis to simulate the look it would have had at the turn of the century. The village's harsh northern environment is beautifully captured by Giorgis Arvantis, the cinematographer on all of Angelopoulos' films.

Demanding Aesthetic Strategies


Greatly complicating this straightforward political exposition is the cinematic rendering of Alexander. Details of his birth are limited to the knowledge that an infant Alexander was

adopted by a village woman (Tula Stahopoulou). Later, Alexander marries this woman, which means his step-sister is also his step-daughter (Eva Kotamanidou). Still other sequences show his sister/daughter as his mistress. A small boy (Ilia Zafiropoulos), who is the son of the adopting mother, is sometimes depicted as being the young Alexander but other times he appears in the same sequence as the elder Alexander. The shifting webs of identity and relationships are so bewildering that the viewer can only accept them as interchangeable generations of characters rather than individuals.

A similar strategy of de-emphasis of personal narratives in revolutionary sagas is found in Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). Eisenstein renders a revolutionary event as the communal experiences of an entire crew rather than that of specific individuals. Catharsis under such a schema emerges from the repeating patterns of human behavior rather than the resolution of particular destinies

Angelopoulos' views about authoritarian revolutionaries are encapsulated in the scene depicting the death of Alexander. The revolt that Alexander first led, then suppressed, has been





crushed by the royalists. The anarchist commune dedicated to individual liberty has been butchered. The hoofs of the royal cavalry's horses can be heard pounding the stones at the outskirts of the village. In a sequence shot from directly above the participants, villagers clad in black robes pull Alexander from his horse, swirling closer and closer until their cloaks smother him to death. When they step back, however, there is only an empty space, for Alexander, as one has guessed all along, is not separate from the villagers, but a part of them. The film is not about alien political factions but the struggle within the soul of the Greek villager. When the royalist cavalry unit clatters into the plaza a few minutes later, rather than finding a flesh-and-blood corpse, the monarchists find a ceremonial bust of Alexander. Safely dead, Alexander may now grace the plaza as a patriot, as beloved in death as he was feared in life.

The final scene of *Alexander the Great* underscores the mythological nature of the film. The young Alexander is seen riding a mule into the city. Angelopoulos has stated, "This is a modern city—present-day Athens, in fact—in contrast to the rural turn-of-the-century world of the rest of the film. When the little Alexander enters the city, he brings all the experience of the century with him. He has gained a total experience of life, sex, and death, and he comes into the city at sunset, and over it there is a great question mark. How long will the night last, and when will a new day break?"

A Cool Initial Reception

Alexander the Great did not fare well with Greek or foreign audiences. One reason Greeks reacted negatively was that Angelopoulos had gone out of his way to remind them that most Greeks were only a single generation removed from 'the village'. Both the brutality and poetry of village life, which had not significantly altered for centuries, were just below the surface of the modern Greek personality. This theme also reflects one of the motifs of *The Traveling Players*. During the course of that film, the troupe is shown trying to perform the nineteenth-century play *Golfo* and never being able to do so, a clear signal from Angelopoulos that the populist melodrama depicts a Greece that exists only in myth and can never be physically 'entered'.

Alexander the Great appeared at a volatile political moment. The fall of the junta in 1974 had initiated a period in which

the civil war era finally came to an end. The Communist Party was re-legalized and the door opened for the return of political exiles. Andreas Papandreou running on the slogan of Allaghi (Change) would soon head the first socialist government in Greek history. Rather than celebrating these changes, Angelopoulos seemed to be resurrecting charges of leftist cruelty during the civil war. That his Alexander bore a striking physical resemblance to Aris Velouhiotis, the most famous leftist guerrilla leader, seemed a retraction of the views so passionately expressed in his political trilogy. Even more troublesome was the depiction of revolutionary leaders just freed from prison ruining a revolution in progress, a theme that echoed the charge raised by some leftists that the revolutionary momentum of the Resistance had been betrayed by Stalinist Communist leaders when they returned to Greece after being released from Nazi prisons.

The Greek left was firmly wedded to the Marxist-Leninist view that revolutions must be led by a vanguard party with roots in an urban working class. The village anarchists of Alexander the Greats embodied a different revolutionary tradition, that of Peter Kropotkin, Errico Malatesta, and Nestor Makhno. Rather than simply being abstractly anti-authoritarian or anti-Stalinist, *Alexander the Great* suggested a non-coercive pathway to a communal future. The same view is hinted at in various scenes in *The Hunters*. And if Alexander on his white mount looked like Aris Velouhiotis to the left, he looked very much like a mockery of Saint George to the right. The English lords allied with the palace paralleled the American allies of contemporary conservatives just as the Italian anarchists resembled the extra-parliamentary groups disrupting normal politics in Italy. The Alexander bust was a clever rebuke to an official history that routinely sanitized the lives and deeds of the contentious guerrilla captains of the struggle for independence.

Angelopoulos believed that reclaiming the revolutionary traditions of Greece had been an intellectual priority in the aftermath of the Greek dictatorship. Now, as parliamentary socialism was on the rise, it was appropriate to ask what kind of democracy and what kind of socialism were appropriate for Greece. At a time when guerilla fighters were being idealized as uncritically as they had once been vilified and an authoritarian leader was again heading a mass movement, *Alexander the Great* boldly took on the unpopular task of



reminding Greece that its beloved Alexanders embodied a cultural heritage capable of crushing their most noble dreams. Angelopoulos wanted to remind the public that the historic Alexander had been as cruel as he was visionary and that the guerrilla captains of the war of national independence often slaughtered their opponents.

Alexander the Great stood alone in the New Greek Cinema. Other noted contemporary directors found it difficult to venture beyond recovering the history that had been denied since the 1950s. Pantelis Voulgaris had presented the travails of royalist concentration camps in the ironically titled *Happy Days* (1976) and would continue to focus on the story of the persecution of the left in *The Stone Years* (*Ta petrina xronia*, 1985). This orientation is found as late as 1997 in Vangelis Serdaris' *Vassiliki*. Nikos Koundouros who had been on the cutting edge of political Greek cinema since the 1950s had taken the politically safe road of dealing with Greek victimization in his epic *1922* (1978).

Also working against popular acceptance of *Alexander the*

Great were Angelopoulos' stylistic peculiarities. His techniques had lost their novelty and often seemed more mannerism than style. Angelopoulos always had argued that his deliberate pacing and the dead spaces he provided in the narrative were designed to liberate the viewer from the tyranny of the director's gaze. Viewers could choose what they wanted to look at in any given scene, had the time to ponder the choices made, and could even go back to look or think about something that hadn't seemed important at first. The paucity of close-ups reflected the reality that most people only 'see' their leaders from a distance. Angelopoulos' approach was so severe, however, that the lack of strong individual identities deprived the film of emotional energy. We learn almost nothing about the wife/mother or sister/daughter. Nor is much information given on the source of the teacher's anarchist creed or the acceptance by the villager of that creed.

Angelopoulos seeks to engage different kinds of viewers by creating various planes of access to his films. These strategies include an ongoing narrative, mythological allusions, and historical corollaries. Angelopoulos doubts anyone but he is aware of all the pathways he has created and he does not consider any given plane more valuable than the others. None of the major portals functioned well in *Alexander the Great*. Audiences were unfamiliar or interested in Alexander lore. The brigand tradition was not compelling, and the individual characters seemed less like persons than schematic prototypes.

Not like Other Anarchist Films

Unlike *Alexander the Great*, most anarchist-themed films employ conventional formats and often valorize individual martyrs. Bob Widerberg's *Joe Hill* (1971) and Giuliano Montaldo's *Sacco and Vanzetti* (1971) come to mind. Terrorism is another popular theme and sees expression in films such as Lina Wertmüller's *Love and Anarchy (Film d'amore e d'anarchia)* (1973) and Claude Charbrol's *Nada* (1974). Such themes had been established in the silent era in films such as Edwin S. Porter's *Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison* (1901) and D. W. Griffith's *The Voice of the Violin* (1909).

Closer in spirit to *Alexander the Great* but in a popular format is Hector Olivera's *Rebellion in Patagonia, La Patagonia rebelde* (1973), a tale of an anarcho-syndicalist revolt by Argentinean farm workers. The rebels are ultimately



betrayed by a duplicitous military and a group of bandit/revolutionaries who call themselves Bolsheviks. Considerable screen time is devoted to explication of anarcho-syndicalist notions of governance and organization. The dramatic crisis turns on whether the anarchist leaders will remain true to their principle of acting as the majority of workers wishes even when they know that majority is wrong. .

Ideology is also central to Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom*. Like George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, it centers on a pro-Communist Englishman who goes to fight for the Spanish Republic and is inadvertently assigned to a POUM unit. He soon comes to support its political perspectives. The plot turns on the Communist liquidation of this and other non-Communist units in the midst of the mortal struggle with the fascist forces of General Franco. Angelopoulos hoped to avoid the emotionalism common in debates within the left by using a political setting that was only metaphorically linked to actual events. Moreover, unlike the two films just cited, Angelopoulos develops his argument primarily with images, actions, and music often linked to everyday events rather than with scenes featuring formal debates. His authoritarian monster is less an outside villain than an inner demon.

Angelopoulos' political trilogy stripped the Greek experience with socialist revolution of all illusions. Rather than drawing a cynical conclusion, in the film that transforms the trilogy into a quartet, Angelopoulos reaffirms the beauty of the communal ideal. In the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union and the global rethinking of the dialectics of revolution, *Alexander the Great* increasingly seems less abstract and narrowly Greek than it once did. Even its technical difficulties have a certain amount of virtue. With the further passage of time, *Alexander the Great* may even be accepted as a masterpiece of its kind.

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Pietro Ferrua

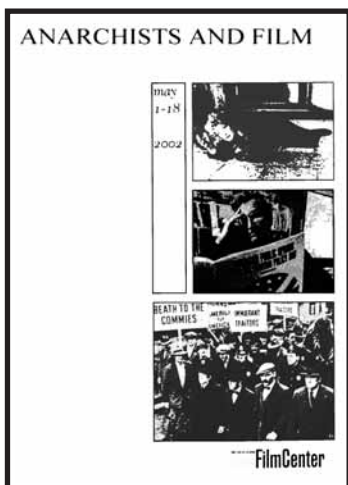
As far as I can ascertain, the first festival of films devoted to anarchism took place in Copenhagen in 1979, although, during a visit to the Danish Film Institute I was unable to find any publication documenting this event. Quite coincidentally, the Danish festival was being inaugurated at the same time we were preparing what we thought would be the first world festival of films on anarchism in Portland, Oregon. We were then surprised by the news coming from Europe and therefore did not insist on the pioneer aspect of our initiative, given the uncertainty of what had happened in Denmark. For this reason, when we announced the First International Symposium on Anarchism at Lewis and Clark College, in February 1980, we did not boast that our event was the first anarchist film festival anywhere on the globe. This was as much a matter of contingency as necessity since we could not, nor did we want to, christen our event a 'festival of anarchist cinema'. First of all, because the event was taking place in academia, financed with grants from a governmental institution (e.g. the French government provided a travel grant for Jean-Louis Comolli's journey to the United States, the use of the diplomatic pouch for several French — and one German — films) and also because we wanted to maintain academic objectivity. A preposition was enough to establish the distinction (as it had happened when I founded the CIRA). Instead of saying for anarchism we chose to say on anarchism, which does mean neither for nor against. The program indeed featured openly anarchist films but also anodyne or objective ones, and even a feature so anti-anarchist — Philip Fourastié's *Les anarchistes ou la bande à Bonnot* — that Dr. Carlos Peregrín Otero, a professor of linguistics at



Pietro Ferrua



U.C.L.A. would have liked to stop the projection of the film. We had to explain that it was not a film that the French government had sent free of charge in order to discredit or provoke us, but rather an independent filmmaker's perspective on an actual event. He depicted the story (partly fictionalized) of the relationship between the gang of the self-labeled French anarchist Jules Bonnot and the editors of an anarchist newspaper of that period, among them the famous Victor Serge and Rirette Maîtrejean, who after the events wrote a memoir detailing the events of this era. Fourastié's film had been selected, by the way, by the Academy of Cinema, directed by an old acquaintance of mine, Georges Franju.



Our Festival Program

Monday, February 18, 1980: A documentary by Steven Fischler and Joel Sucher, *The Free Voice of Labor: The Jewish Anarchists* — presented as a world premiere in the presence of the two filmmakers and also of Kristina Boden, Maria Gil and Erika Gottfried, all members of the Pacific Street Film Collective. Ahrne Thorne, the last editor of the Yiddish anarchist newspaper *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, was also present at the opening — as well as a Polish comrade then living in New York but since deceased. Two other interviewees in the film, Esther and Sam Dolgoff, flew to Portland expressly for the premiere. Another historical event was the

May 1 — 18 beginning of shooting of the Collective's subsequent
2002 documentary, *Anarchism in America*.

Tuesday, Feb. 19 *Sacco and Vanzetti* by Giuliano Montaldo.

Wednesday, Feb. 20 the short *Homage to Durruti* (with the famous impressive scene of the funeral) from the CNT-FAI archives, followed by the German long feature *Malatesta* by Peter Lilienthal.

Thursday, Feb. 21 the Argentine film *La Patagonia rebelde* by Héctor Olivera.

Friday, Feb. 22 *Os libertários* by Lauro Escorel Júnior and *Les anarchistes et la bande à Bonnot*, the French film that proved so controversial.

Saturday, Feb. 23 *La Cecilia* by Jean-Louis Comolli. The French

director was to be present but he was instead replaced by Eduardo de Gregorio, an Argentine filmmaker living in Paris, one of the film's screenwriters.

Sunday, Feb. 24 Waldo Frank's short documentary about the Spanish Revolution, *The Will of the People*, followed by Jean Vigo's *Zéro de conduite*.

During a round table on cinema moderated by the local film director Penny Allen, it was proposed that this festival became an annual event. In the wake of this enthusiasm, the project of an annual symposium was also examined. Back to daily routine and reality we quickly concluded that such an event could not take place in Portland on a regular basis, and no one offered to organize it elsewhere.

Ultimately, there wasn't a second symposium but instead the launch, at the University of Montreal, in the Summer of 1983, of the Anarchos Institute. I was invited as a co-founder and as a speaker, and I met for the first time Murray Bookchin (with whom I even shared a room), Noam Chomsky, Dimitri Roussopoulos, among many others. My task was mostly to talk about 'Surrealism and Anarchism', another topic that became 'fashionable' and inspired research and numerous publications. Immediately after my sojourn in Canada I went to Paris, where I shared my enthusiasm with José Pierre, whom I convinced to gather in a volume all the 'Billets surréalistes' that André Breton and his followers had published regularly in the weekly organ of the French Anarchist Federation, *Le Libertaire*.

Our project to organize a series of anarchist film events was not neglected, however. In 1983, I was able to organize another world premiere, Oscar Menéndez Zavala's *Barbarous Mexico* and was able to invite the filmmaker to Portland. I had discovered him through the Locarno International Film Festival where he had previously screened *El periodista Turner*. In Mexico, John Kenneth Turner is a hero, considered one of the great literary proponents of the Mexican Revolution. His book, *Barbarous Mexico* is required reading in Mexican high schools. When I wrote to Menéndez that I wanted to show his film in Portland he was so shocked (flattered? moved?) that he answered enthusiastically and decided that he would blow-up the 16mm

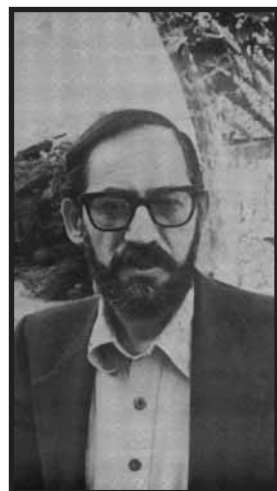




copy to 35mm, add some more materials, include the voices of John Kenneth Turner and his wife Ethel Duffy (who remained involved with the Mexican anarchists all her life) etchings by José Guadalupe Posada, a noted artist and collaborator in the campaigns of the brothers Flores Magón, who began plans to topple the tyrannical Porfirio Diaz government ten years before the revolution took place. Despite being born in Portland, John Kenneth Turner was forgotten or shamelessly ignored, and we did our best to commemorate him in the press as well as appealing to the state of Oregon, which published a booklet honoring its native son.

In 1984 I went to Mexico to visit Menéndez Zavala, who helped me discover other Mexican filmmakers who had endeavored to chronicle the anarchist contribution to the Mexican Revolution: Raúl Kamffer (since prematurely deceased), Ramón Aupart and Marcela Fernández Violante. Together we planned festivals and other events which that only materialized at a much later date (In 2002 we were able to invite Marcela Fernández Violante to Portland, the charming director of *Cananea*, a film that reconstitutes a famous 1906 strike in the copper mines of that border town, an event often considered the first spark of the imminent revolution.)

In 1985, the Australian comrade Hilary May, who had attended the 1980 Portland Symposium, wrote to ask for our help in organizing an anarchist film festival in her



Oscar
Menéndez
Zavala

country. We readily agreed to collaborate with her and the International Anarchist Film Festival became a reality and took place in Melbourne May 2-4, 1986. The program encompassed some of the films included in our 1980 series, as well as some other local productions which we were not aware of: *Elsie. A Study of a collective* (Australia, 1977, 12') directed by Liz Rust and Toni Colston, and *Harry Howton* (Australia, 1970, 83') by Arthur and Corinne Cantrill.

From this point on, festivals and film series devoted to anarchist subjects multiplied and scattered around the world — with or without our input. In most cases, however, they were not real festivals, with new films and the presence of filmmakers, but mere projections of videos.

In 2000, Bill Foster, director of the Northwest Film Center (Portland Art Museum) and of the Portland International Film Festival, called me. Twenty years had passed since the first Anarchists in Film series, an event that he had attended (and in



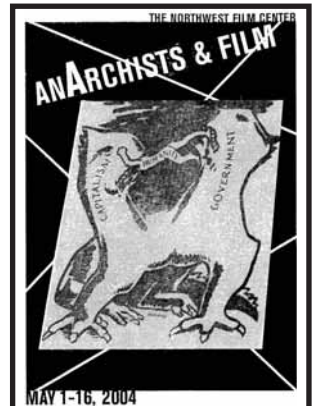
which he participated as a panelist in a round table discussion) and he thought it was time for us to revive the festival's original impetus. He invited me to assemble an annual festival, lasting about two weeks, with a daily show. He did not have funds for honoraria but could offer travel grants and local hospitality to guest speakers coming from out of town or even from abroad. He could also afford to publish a program and promised a generous advertising budget. Moreover, he would give me carte blanche in the choice of films and guests. I accepted without hesitation and on May 1st 2002 we inaugurated the festival in the presence of the directors of *Anarchism in America*, Steven Fischler and Joel Sucher, who flew in from New York for the screening, and we also welcomed Marcela Fernández Violante from Mexico City, and Nick Sheehan, a Canadian graduate student, author of a thesis on anarchist film attended and lent his expertise. The program comprised about fifteen titles.

In 2003, we showed an equal number of films and the guests of honor were Barry Pateman, from the Emma Goldman Archives of the University of California at Berkeley, and Richard Porton, the author of *Film and the Anarchist Imagination*. Dave Milholland, an old friend, and a distinguished director of shorts and documentaries, moderated the round table.

In 2004, the visitors included Marianne Enckell, the director of the library at the International Center of Research on Anarchism (C.I.R.A.) in Lausanne. She also distributed a recently issued publication—*Bulletin du C.I.R.A.* n.60 (May 2004), an extremely useful anarchist filmography. The film director of the year was Mel Bucklin, who screened her latest feature, a documentary on Emma Goldman commissioned by the Public Broadcasting Service's American Experience series, a film that generated considerable discussion within the anarchist community.

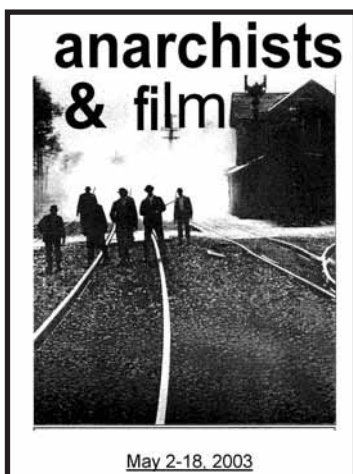
In 2005, the Festival moved from Portland to San Francisco's Yerba Buena Art Museum. Among the people present were Audrey Goodfriend and Jean Pauline, old acquaintances of the 1980 Portland Festival. Our honored guest was Dr. Candace Falk, the dynamic founder of the Emma Goldman Archives. The festival closed with the visit of another old acquaintance, Judy Stone, a B. Traven specialist and the sister of the late I.F.Stone, the subject of one of the films screened during the festival. Before concluding

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2004:
Cover
illustration by
Man Ray "The
Monster of
Capitalism and
Government
Devouring
Humanity".
Cover
Illustration of
Mother Earth
(New York)
August 1914





La Cecilia assisting him on *La Cecilia*), Xan Leira (Spain), Héctor Olivera (Argentina), John Sayles, Steven Soderbergh (Usa), and Noam Chomsky. Professor Ronald Creagh, of the University of Montpellier was a particularly regretted absence, due to the fact that he founded the most important research site on Anarchism, the *RA_Forum*, that dedicates unlimited space to the study of the relationship between cinema and anarchism.



Creators and Spectators

Since we first organized anarchist festivals in Portland, technological innovations can now enable even inexperienced artists to shoot their 'anarchist film' on a shoestring budget. Up to a few years ago, one needed complex devices, teams of technicians, hundreds of thousands — if not millions of dollars — to produce a film. Today, a basement, a cheap camcorder and a desktop computer with abundant memory suffice to solve complicated problems of sound, light, editing.

Yet filmmakers, even more than writers and painters, require an audience. The efforts of lone creators enclosed in their ivory towers are not

May 2 — 18
2003 sufficient. Works of art need listeners, readers, and spectators — in other words, a public. Not necessarily a big crowd but 'an interested group of persons'. Every year I receive hundreds of messages (by letter, e-mails, fax, telephone) asking for help in organizing film projections. Some ask me if I can send them copies of films without realizing that we are (almost) all slaves of the local market conditions.

Our festival in Portland is sponsored by a museum and it is unthinkable that we'd screen pirated copies of a film on video support. The film society rents films (preferably in 35mm) from distributors and pays royalties. Because of matters of principle (ethical, aesthetic, political, etc.) we don't show films that have

not been solicited or selected and previewed — with the exception of films that have been brought by a film director, producer, distributor to illustrate his/her lecture. My criteria for selection are not whimsical, but neither are we one-sided. We have even shown anti-anarchist films when the film language proved innovative and the directors intellectually honest. On the other hand, we've rejected mere provocations such as Jordan Susman's *The Anarchist Cookbook* (which features pseudo-anarchist drug peddlers and whose main protagonist heroically becomes an FBI snitch) or *Anarchy USA* (a product of the Cold War financed by the John Birch Society).

In any case, leaving aside these frivolous titles, there is still an enormous number to choose from. CIRA lists over two thousand titles, and international production adds at least about one hundred titles every year. All this should suffice to cover the leisure and cultural activities of groups, associations, unions, and anyone else interested in organizing an ad hoc festival.

The only problem involves knowing where to start. Of course, this has to be decided by the parties involved. I've observed that Spain is perhaps the greatest producer of films on anarchist subjects — and it's also worth noting that the Latin-American market of Spanish speaking countries extends to over twenty nations. With English subtitles the potential public would double.

Besides being a hint, this is meant to be also an invitation...

Ferrua@lclark.edu

Useful Sites

cira@plusloin.org

(The most complete filmography related to anarchism)

<http://raforum.info>

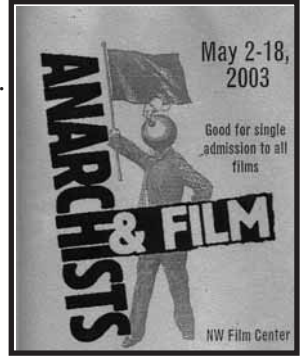
(The University of Montpellier site created by Prof. Ronald Creagh specialises in anarchist research and contains hundreds of film synopses)

[http://www.brightcove.tv/channel.jsp?channel=219646953&first](http://www.brightcove.tv/channel.jsp?channel=219646953&firstVideo=0)

<http://www.brightcove.tv> and type in ChristieBooks (Many films on the subject of anarchism, most of them not commercially available, can be watched for free on this site)

<http://www.christiebooks.com>

(Anarchism and Film database compiled by Santiago Juan Navarro)



DO YOUR RADICAL IDEAS LEAVE YOU FEELING ISOLATED AND ALONE?

Then perhaps now is the time to find like minded people to share your discontent with the way the world is. The Royal Society of Anarchists® exists for people just like you. By taking out our Congenital Malcontent Membership (Basic) package, you will immediately be put in touch with comrades who share your anomie and alienation. Take part in social actions, discuss the horrors of the grease balls who run things, complain and moan about the way the world is falling apart, and never seems to achieve proper freedom and justice, and enjoy the collective guilt of not doing enough to change things.

Joining the RSA is easy. Just pledge your entire worldly belongings to the cause and mail in a plain envelope (marked Malcontent) to M15 Headquarters in London. One of our specially trained operatives will then pay you a visit check and record your details, and that's it! It's that simple.



You'll never regret your decision to join; and things will never be the same again.



SYSTEM OVERLOAD

THE ANARCHIST REBEL

IN WILLIAM KEDDELL'S

'THE MAINTENANCE OF SILENCE'

Russell Campbell

New Zealanders can be forgiven a sense of disbelief when they woke up on Saturday to see coils of barbed-wire staked in double lanes around the sportsground in Palmerston North, and police squads guarding every intersection. But the real shock came shortly before 2 pm when 2,500 anti-apartheid protestors came face-to-face with the Red Squad —and stopped in their tracks, appalled and afraid. Orwell's spectre of tomorrow, God help us, is here today! It stood there at the intersection of Cuba and David Streets, unflinching, cold, remorseless. [1]



Like this Australian observer, many in New Zealand in the early 1980s feared that Orwell's *1984* was rapidly approaching. In the winter of 1981, massive protests against the Springbok rugby tour brought out the riot police — with backup from the military. On the day of the match in Palmerston North, a demonstration leader told the protesters: 'I'd like to welcome all of you from out of town to the city of Palmerston North which is a city under siege. We've got 1500 cops here, we've got long batons, short batons, we've got dogs, we've got barbed wire, we've got the air force overhead and the army at the ground. Which will make any South Africans in this town feel pretty much at home, because it's very much like Johannesburg.' [2] As the marchers passed the Red Squad, they chanted 'two, four, six, eight, police are pawns of the fascist state.' [3]

Less than three weeks later Prime Minister Robert Muldoon released a report from the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) that named 15 'radicals' involved in the anti-tour protest movement, including eight allegedly belonging



Neil Ian Roberts movement. [5] In 1977, the Security Intelligence Service Amendment Act consolidated the powers of the state to spy on those it deemed security threats. Twenty thousand demonstrators marched against the passage of the bill to no avail, and even a government MP warned that 'New Zealand was well on the way to becoming a police state.' [6]

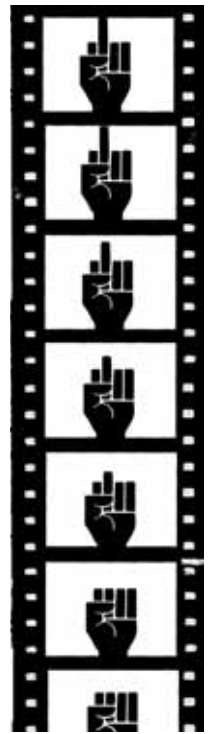
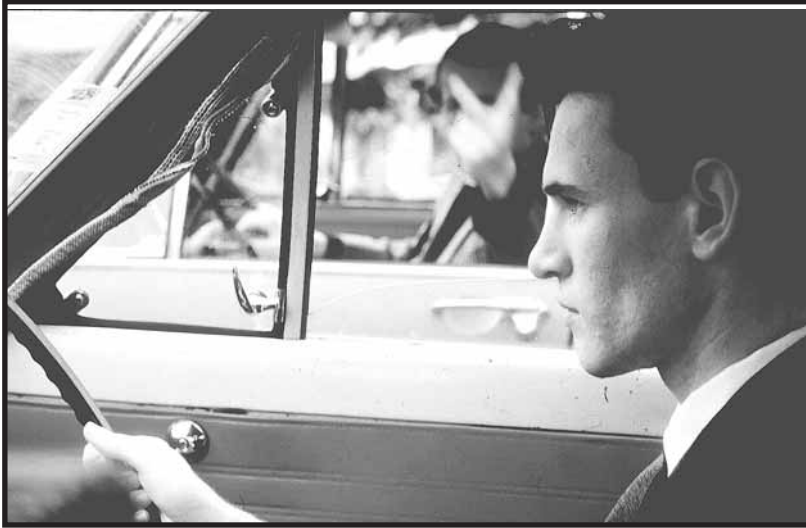
To its opponents, a major symbol of the creeping fascism of the Muldoon regime was the Wanganui Computer. Commissioned in 1976 and operated by the police, it was a centralised national database on individuals. Information held by the police was pooled with that from the justice and land transport departments, and could be accessed by authorities 24 hours a day.

At 12:35 a.m. on 18 November 1982, 22-year-old Neil Ian Roberts detonated six sticks of gelignite outside the entrance to the computer centre. A large explosion occurred, and Roberts was killed instantly. No one else was hurt. The foyer of the building was extensively damaged, but police claimed that normal operation of the computer system continued unimpeded. [7]

Roberts was a punk anarchist. Shortly before the bombing he had spraypainted 'WE HAVE MAINTAINED A SILENCE CLOSELY RESEMBLING STUPIDITY' in a nearby public toilet. He had also painted the anarchy-is-order symbol (A circled by an O) and the words 'anarchy peace thinking'. Evidence pointed to the act being intentional suicide; in a gruesome detail, a piece of his breast bearing the tattooed inscription 'this punk won't see 23 — no future' was found amongst the debris. [8]

A number of small anarchist groups were scattered around New Zealand in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Inheritors of the tradition of organised political protest from the days of the Vietnam War and the collective ethos of the hippie counter-culture, they engaged in activities like promoting nonviolent tactics of direct action within the peace





movement. Punk was different. 'Punk could be seen as an angry working-class counter-cultural response to the mid-1970s recession, the nationwide mood of decline and the conservative authoritarian backlash against the liberalism of the 1960s,' writes Toby Boraman. [9]

Contributing to the mood of despair was the growing threat of nuclear annihilation. As Reagan ordered the production of the neutron bomb, American warships with missile warheads capable of destroying 192 cities were officially welcomed into New Zealand harbours. [10] Meanwhile, unemployment was at a level unseen since the Great Depression. Nevertheless, Muldoon's National government was re-elected in 1978 and 1981.

When punk adopted an anarchist stance it was thus a 'blacker, darker, more negative approach to things.' [11] Boraman relates that 'by the late 1970s, a very loose community of anarchist punks emerged ... made up of scores of unemployed youth.' [12] An anarchist punk magazine entitled *Fascism and Boredom* appeared in 1982. As one commentator writes: 'Punk is often dismissed as negative and nihilistic, but in the early 80s it was a child of its time: not only a protest against the stifling and boring cultural conformity in Aotearoa, but also an understandably pessimistic reaction to the state of the kiwi society at the time.' [13]

Neil Roberts was a part of this loose community. He had been involved in the anti-Springbok tour movement, and

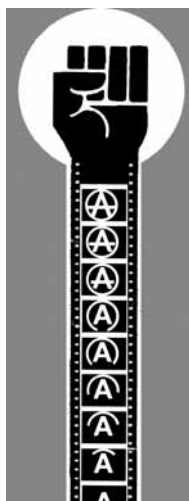
spoke of the 'raw deals' he had been given by the police. [14] Originally from Auckland, he had been living for some months prior to the bombing in the province of Taranaki, near to Wanganui. His action, according to friends, had been planned for some time; one said, 'It was not an act of cowardice ... it was making a statement with his life.' [15]

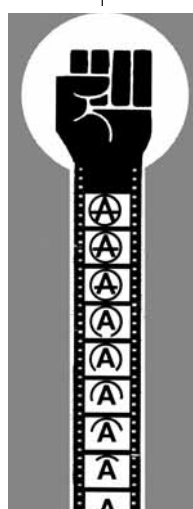
Roberts thus joined the ranks of Camus's rebels. 'If an individual actually consents to die, and, when the occasion arises, accepts death as a consequence of his rebellion', Camus wrote, 'he demonstrates that he is willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of a common good which he considers more important than his own destiny.' [16] In targeting the police computer Roberts may have taken his cue from the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta, who with a small band of comrades in 1877 carried out insurrectionary acts in mountain villages of the south. Waving a red and black banner, declaring King Vittorio Emanuele II deposed, and shouting 'Long live the Social Revolution!', they seized and burned tax registers, records of property ownership, and other official documents, thus performing what historian James Joll terms an 'anarchist ritual'. [17]

If Roberts conceived of his action in this way as propaganda by the deed, he was no more successful than Malatesta in sparking off a revolution. And by and large, the New Zealand media dismissed the bombing as the misguided gesture of a misfit. It was this that disturbed filmmaker William Keddell when he determined to make a short film about the event.

Returning to New Zealand in 1982 after ten years in London – where he graduated BA (Hons) from the Chelsea School of Art and was involved in film projects — he was shocked by the change the country had undergone. 'When I came back nobody seemed to have noticed that New Zealand had become a police state', he says, citing the harassment from the police Merata Mita was undergoing while making her documentary about the Springbok tour protests. When the bombing occurred, he was angered by 'the media reaction to what was clearly a politically motivated suicide. The 'misguided youth' stuff just swept the real issues under the carpet.' For Keddell, 'the Wanganui Computer was worth protesting about. It represented a profound and sad change in New Zealand'. [18]

For his project Keddell received funding from the Queen





Elizabeth II Arts Council (augmented by a tax write-off scheme) and later a completion grant from the New Zealand Film Commission. 'I got a knock on the door from some plainclothes Auckland cops when the Arts Council grant for the film was announced in the NZ Herald,' Kedell relates. 'They asked me some basic questions but when they realized I was not trying to incite a rebellion they left me alone.' [19] Titled *The Maintenance of Silence*, the film was shot on 16mm in Auckland, Taranaki and Wanganui. [20] With a running time of 22 minutes, it was completed and released in 1985. [21]

The film uses the device of a fictional character, a dapper young man named Eric probing into the facts of the case, to tell its story of the bombing. The protagonist (played by a nonprofessional actor, Tony Drumm), disturbed by being awoken in Auckland at precisely the moment the bomb is detonated in Wanganui, becomes absorbed in pondering the character and fate of Neil Roberts. He contacts a friend of Neil's, Brian, in Auckland, and then travels to Taranaki where he discusses Neil's last days with Carol, another friend. Finally he interviews the manager of the cinema where Roberts had gone on the night of the bombing. Interspersed are dramatised re-enactments of the actual events of the fateful night. The film comes to a surreal conclusion with Eric, following a car crash, levitating to a great height over country paddocks, while back in Wanganui a workman paints over Neil's anarchist graffiti message.

In its account of Roberts and the bombing, the film sustains

a documentary-like authenticity. Brian is based on, and played by, a close friend of Neil's, Russell Jephson. [22] The scene with Carol was modelled on an actual interview with another friend of Neil's, Cheryl. 'Staying with her was very revealing,' Keddell says. 'She took me to visit the dairy farmers where Neil had been working before his final trip to Wanganui.' [23] Jephson and Cheryl were Keddell's 'principal research guides' and approved the script. [24] There was also nothing fictionalised in the scene with the cinema manager, played by well-known actor Martyn Sanderson. 'Martyn's script came from a tape-recorded interview of the real Wanganui cinema manager,' Keddell explains. 'I played it to Martyn as I showed him the script. He got it down so well that it was eerie.' The scene was filmed on the actual location. [25]

The film also incorporates a re-created scene with a real radio newsreader, Nigel Horrocks ('his script is exactly what they said on the radio news'), as well as excerpts from original radio broadcasts and newspaper stories (television is notably absent). In addition, cards and letters from Neil to his friends that are shown on screen and quoted from are genuine. For the explosion itself, Keddell explains that he talked with the detective heading the investigation in Wanganui and was shown all the crime scene photos. [26]

The roots in documentary authenticity give the vision of *The Maintenance of Silence* a solidity that prevents it from being dismissed as a paranoid nightmare. This is a world of pubs, petrol stations, farms and hamburger bars, as well as a giant computer. The surveillance society creeps up benignly on its citizens in the mundane form of a radio traffic report from the 'Eye in the Sky': we see the plane in the air, and its panoramic view of the motorways below. [27] And the policeman on the beat at night, too, is just keeping an eye on traffic — calling in by radio to the computer centre asking for details on 'DG 2387', with the cop at the keyboard in response identifying the car's owner and asking routinely whether he should run a check on him. Eric's voice-over has a panicked ring to it — 'the Computer Centre, that ominous machine, the State home of files, of personal information on all citizens, information obtainable at any hour' — but the fear of being at the mercy of an omniscient, omnipotent State is here grounded in the depiction of an all-too-familiar social reality.

The detonation of gelignite in a red carry-bag is the



individual act of rebellion that says no to the insidious advance of totalitarianism. We see Neil setting the bomb and the subsequent explosion three times in the film, centring our consciousness on the act. The first time, in a complex flurry of images, it's intercut with Eric awakening to a flash of light, and with the hands of the police keyboard operator, likewise lit up. And then on the computer screen comes the message, over and over: 'SYSTEM OVERLOAD'. The second time the bombing is preceded by Neil completing his graffiti painting. Then, in a similar montage to the first, it is associated with Eric driving at night, the polaroid photographs he has taken of newspaper clippings, other photographs including a snapshot of young man who is in fact the real Neil Roberts [28], and the card Brian showed him, with its message, 'Growing old is nothing to celerbrate [sic]. Neil Nothing.' Eric's voice-over offers a stream of consciousness: 'The never-ending stream of signs. The never-ending stream of déjà vu, the never-ending stream of coincidences, of parallels, parallels. I could only go on.' The shot of the explosion is here held longer, in slow motion, and the fragmentation is followed by a burst of flame. In its final rendition, the bombing is shown as a more integral sequence of events: Neil spraypainting, then exiting the toilet block, walking alongside the computer centre to the lighted entrance, setting his bag down, leaning over to touch the contact wires, and then silhouetted as the explosion takes place. Intercut this time there are only close-up shots of Eric driving at night, his face illuminated by a red flash.

Mirroring the obsession in Eric's mind, the film circles round again and again to the deed, the protest, the violence, the death. It is as if Neil is Eric's doppelgänger, the punk underside to the fastidious young man in black suit and tie who plunges into his unconscious in his desperation to understand the act. 'The explosion — only a dream, I told myself.' This is where, perhaps, those strange images of levitation come in, feet lifting off the ground, and then, again, the body released from gravity rising like a balloon over the lush Taranaki



pasture. 'Rebellion is not realistic', writes Camus. [29]

This is the penultimate scene, and if the film had stopped there it would have left us with a psychologising interpretation of Neil Roberts's life and death. But no. It bluntly returns us to politics. A man gazes skywards, and then gets back to the job in hand – painting over the graffiti in the toilet, erasing the message of revolt. The image freezes.

'By Saturday morning it was no longer front-page news,' Eric's melancholy commentary informs us. 'Barely two days later, and it was all over — covered, finished, judged and concluded. It was all over. All was quiet. A silence held by a silence.' The voice-over that has been as relentless as the news machine it bitterly complains of finally comes to a halt. The quiet has been shattered but for a moment by the rebel's self-sacrificing act of defiance, and now the silent majority submits once more to the sinister machine encroaching on their liberties. As Camus observed, 'To keep quiet is to allow yourself to believe that you have no opinions, that you want nothing, and in certain cases it amounts to really wanting nothing.' [30]

*With thanks to William Keddell, Toby Boraman, and Martin Rumsby. Stills from **The Maintenance of Silence** are courtesy of William Keddell*

Notes

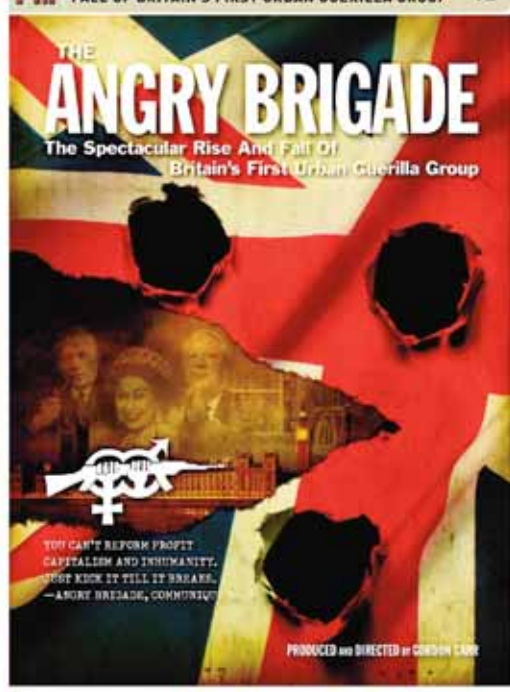
1. Philip Cornford, 'Orwell's Grim Spectre Stalks Manawatu', *The Dominion*, August 7, 1981, p 11. The article was republished from *The Australian*.
2. The scene is recorded in the documentary *Patu!* (1983, director Merata Mita).
3. Cornford, p 11.
4. See *The Evening Post*, 25 August 1981, p 1, and *The Dominion*, 26 August 1981, p 1. Muldoon later settled out of court a libel case brought by one of those named, Tama Poata. See Barry Gustafson, *His Way: A Biography of Robert Muldoon* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2000), 424.
5. See Gustafson, 194.
6. Gustafson, 195. The MP was Mike Minogue.
7. For information on the bombing and the anarchist context for it I am indebted to 'The Death of Neil Roberts and the Bombing of the Wanganui Police Computer' (unsigned), <http://cw178.tripod.com/neil1.htm> (accessed 23 March 2007), Toby Boraman, 'The New Left and Anarchism in New



- Zealand from 1956 to the Early 1980s: An Anarchist Communist Interpretation' (PhD thesis, History, University of Otago, 2006), 415-17, and **Toby Boraman**, *Rabble Rousers and Merry Pranksters: A History of Anarchism in Aotearoa/New Zealand from the Mid-1950s to the Early 1980s* (Christchurch: Katipo Books, 2007), 128-31.
8. 'Man Blows Himself Up, Holing Computer Centre,' *Evening Post*, 18 November 1982, 1.
 9. **Boraman**, *Rabble Rousers*, 128-9.
 10. New Zealand was part of a defence alliance with the United States. The implications of the alliance, and the activities of the anti-nuclear movement of the time, are explored in the documentary *Islands of the Empire* (1985, directors Alister Barry, Russell Campbell and Rod Prosser).
 11. Richard Suggate, quoted in **Boraman**, *Rabble Rousers*, 129.
 12. **Boraman**, *Rabble Rousers*, 129.
 13. 'The Death of Neil Roberts and the Bombing of the Wanganui Police Computer.'
 14. **Boraman**, *Rabble Rousers*, 131.
 15. Bronwyn Dutton, quoted in **Edward Rooney**, 'We Remember Neil Roberts...', *NZ Truth*, 21 November 1989 (online at <http://cw178.tripod.com/neil1.htm>, accessed 23 March 2007).
 16. **Albert Camus**, *The Rebel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), 21.
 17. See **Nunzio Pernicone**, *Italian Anarchism 1864-1892* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1993), 124-25; **James Joll**, *The Anarchists* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1966), 122; and **George Woodcock**, *Anarchism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 320-21. **Toby Boraman**, commenting on a draft of this article, writes: 'My only query about your article is your comparison of Roberts' act with Malatesta's grand failure in promoting insurrection in Italy. Yup the symbolic burning of government property has parallels with Roberts' act. But overall I would compare Roberts' act with the individualist tradition of anarchism rather than the class-struggle tradition of anarchism that Malatesta was associated with. Individualist anarchists carried out various illegal acts and bombings in order to scare those in authority and promote individual rebellion (see e.g. **Richard Parry**, *The Bonnot Gang*). (Email to author, 21 October 2007.)
 18. **William Keddell**, email interview with author, 12 June

2007.

19. Keddell, email interview 12 June 2007.
20. Two scenes (Eric shaving and the levitation) were shot on 35mm and then transferred to 16mm on a home-made optical printer. Keddell, email interview with author, 23 June 2007.
21. *The Maintenance of Silence* played in the Auckland and Wellington Film Festivals (accompanying **Jim Jarmusch's** *Stranger than Paradise*) and was subsequently shown in New Zealand, Canada and the United States in a touring programme of experimental shorts and documentaries organised by Martin Rumsby. 'Martin in my view is an unsung hero of NZ non-commercial film distribution,' says Keddell. 'He turned up in NYC when I was there and showed a programme at which the NZ ambassador was appalled by *Maintenance*. I guess it didn't aid NZ tourism or trade.' (Email interview 12 June 2007.) Keddell himself arranged screenings in the UK. It subsequently had television broadcasts in New Zealand and Australia and was distributed on video by the New Zealand Film Commission.
22. Keddell says Jephson was 'a great help... a very bright and thinking person who confirmed to me that Neil's act was not just a blind nor foolish act.' (Email interview 12 June 2007)
23. Keddell, email interview 12 June 2007.
24. Keddell, email to author, 28 June 2007.
25. Keddell, email interviews 12 June and 23 June 2007. In this scene the authenticity creates a slight clash with the fictional Eric story, which is supposed to take place in the two days following the bombing. The manager says, 'I most certainly do remember, it's a night I won't forget' — hardly something he would say in the immediate aftermath of the event.
26. Keddell, email interviews 12 June and 23 June 2007. He adds: 'Had I wanted to I could have used those gruesome pictures.'
27. Keddell explains simply: 'My brother was for a time the Radio Eye in the Sky for Radio i. That is how I chose the aeroplane as a device. Sometimes I would fly as his passenger out of Ardmore.' (Email interview 12 June 2007.)
28. Keddell, email interview 23 June 2007.
29. Camus, 23.
30. Camus, 19-20.



"You can't reform profit capitalism and inhumanity. Just kick it till it breaks."

Angry Brigade, communiqué.

Between 1970 and 1972 the Angry Brigade used guns and bombs in a series of symbolic attacks against property. A series of communiqués accompanied the actions, explaining the choice of targets and the Angry Brigade philosophy: autonomous organization and attacks on property alongside other forms of militant working class action. Targets included the embassies of repressive regimes, police stations and army barracks, boutiques and factories, government departments and the homes of Cabinet ministers, the Attorney General and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. These attacks on the homes of senior political figures increased the pressure for results and brought an avalanche of police raids. From the start the police were faced with the difficulty of getting to grips with a section of society they found totally alien. And were they facing an organization or an idea?

This documentary, produced by Gordon Carr for the BBC (and first shown in January 1973, shortly after the trial), covers the roots of the Angry Brigade in the revolutionary ferment of the 1960s, and follows their campaign and the police investigation to its culmination in the 'Stoke Newington 8' conspiracy trial at the Old Bailey, the longest criminal trial in British legal history. Produced after extensive research among both the libertarian opposition and the police, it remains the essential study of Britain's first urban guerilla group.

Extra: The Persons Unknown (1980, 22 minutes)

The so-called 'Persons Unknown' case in which members of the Anarchist Black Cross were tried (and later acquitted) at the Old Bailey on charges of 'conspiring with persons unknown, at places unknown, to cause explosions and to overthrow society.' Featuring interviews and footage of Stuart Christie, Nicholas Walter, Crass and many other UK anarchist activists and propagandists of the time.

JUGGLING BALLS

**Throw Them, Catch Them,
Try not to drop them!**

BALLES À JONGLER

**Lancez-les, Attrapez-les,
Essayez de ne pas les faire tomber!**

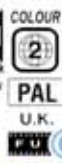
JONGLIERBÄLLE

**Wirf sie, fang sie auf.
Versuche, sie nicht fallen zu lassen!**

CE **GB** SMALL PARTS - CHOKING HAZARD
Please retain this information.
FR PIÈCES DE PETITE TAILLE -
RISQUE D'ÉTOUFFEMENT
Conservez ces informations.
DE KLEINE TEILE -
ERSTICKUNGSGEFAHR
Bitte diese Information behalten.

IT CONTIENE PICCOLI PEZZI -
RISCHIO DI SOFFOCAMENTO
Conservare questa informazione.
ES PIEZAS PEQUEÑAS
RIESGO DE AHOGAMIENTO
Por favor conserve esta información.

A GENERAL USE
But mainly for
anoraks.
Not suitable
for hoodies.



NOT FOR SALE OR RENTAL



COP WATCH L.A. POPULAR RESISTANCE TO POLICE BRUTALITY



**Richard Modiano
X359594 IU 640**

The 1991 beating of African American motorist Rodney King at the hands of Los Angeles Police Department officers was caught on video by chance. King was arrested and taken to the hospital for medical treatment where his injuries were described by the cops as having



occurred while resisting arrest. The story would have ended there, and another 'out of control' black man would have been booked for the usual misdemeanors compounded by a felonious assault on the police. But twenty-four hours later a video of the beating exposed the official story, and the officers involved were charged with police brutality. During the trial, recordings of police radio transmissions were introduced into evidence that clearly showed the racial nature of the attack on King. Yet, the cops were acquitted, and an angry under class rose up against all expectations. The 1992 Los Angeles Uprising led to the fall of the reactionary chief of police Darryl Gates and a partial, but not complete, de-militarization of the LAPD.

Since then there have been other video recordings of police misconduct, but these were chance occurrences like the King beating. However, thanks to the availability of cell phone video and photography and low cost video cameras any citizen at any time can make a record of daily reality. Last year a group of Los Angeles



L.A. March 3,
1991

Rodney King





The Los Angeles riots of 1992 were sparked on April 29, 1992 when a jury acquitted four police officers accused in the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King following a high-speed pursuit. Thousands of people in the Los Angeles area rioted over the six days following the verdict.

area anarchists realized the potential of cell phone videography for capturing cops interacting with citizens and demonstrated how it could be a powerful tool for keeping the police in line. They formed an organization called Cop Watch L. A. (CWLA) whose mission is to 'end police terrorism through collecting information on and observing police activity' as well as offering support to those caught in the criminal justice system. Further, the members of Cop Watch L. A. are struggling for change at the roots, not mere reform, and are working side-by-side with communities to create revolutionary alternatives to policing, prisons, and all systems of domination, oppression and exploitation.

These are ambitious goals, and they start on the streets. CWLA has formed neighborhood patrols made up of people who live in their communities, and they see these patrols as part of a larger process of building autonomy, self-determination, and self-organization at the grassroots level. As Joaquin Cienfuegos, a member of CWLA - South Central Chapter put it: 'In CWLA we understand that a larger struggle has to be waged to end police brutality, and a revolutionary movement has to be built in our communities to end the police occupation. We want to create liberated autonomous

zones for people to have self-determination, and self-organization as oppressed people. Cop Watch LA is part of that process. We want to show people and empower them so that they can also take direct action against the police, and defend themselves and where they live so that we won't be victims of the police anymore.'



In November 2006 CWLA received national US media attention after they posted a video of the arrest of William Cardenas, an alleged gang member, on YouTube. Shot by a neighbour of Cardenas with a cell phone camera, the video eventually reached CWLA. It showed Cardenas repeatedly punched in the face by officers while under restraint. It prompted investigations into police conduct by both the LAPD and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

A CWLA patrol is equipped with a video camera or cell phone camera and a mini flashlight. An ideal patrol would also have walkie-talkies and a police scanner on hand. Fellow worker Cienfuegos describes two patrols he made with South Central members: 'On New Year's Day, 2007, CWLA went out on a patrol of the South Central Area of Los Angeles. Usually, we see many cops in the area near the University of Southern California, a private university in the middle of South Central that many privileged students attend. Officers are usually out protecting the white upper-middle class students from the residents of South Central. We passed through this area as we were headed back to our office. On Figueroa and Adams we spotted officers and a cop car. It looked like they were searching a car':

'Three of us walked up to the scene, a person with a video camera, a liaison (which is a person who talks to the police if they approach us), and a note-taker.

'It was a traffic stop. Two white male cops stopped a Brown brother, and had him in the back seat of their car already in handcuffs. When they noticed us, the police still went about their business; but it seemed like they were scared, they were trying to be as careful as possible. They

On November 3, 2006, a video of the arrest of alleged gang member William Cardenas was posted to YouTube by **CopWatch LA**. The video, in which Cardenas struggles to prevent the police from handcuffing him after attempting to escape arrest, shows an officer repeatedly punching him in the face while trying to force his hands together. The two officers are Alexander Schleg and Patrick Farrell,



called a tow truck, but they let the Mexican brother get his belongings from the car and then they let him go as well, but they towed his ride. We ran up to him and started talking to him, and gave him our card with CWLA contact info. It looked like he was going to walk and catch the bus, so we gave him a ride home.

On the way to his home he talked to us about where he was from, and about his work. He works in construction and has a second job at Popeye's Chicken. He is undocumented so he can't get a license, but needs a car because both jobs are far from each other and from his home. He told us that it was the third car that was taken away from him.'

'Fox (serial number: 36630) who was the arresting officer, a white bald-headed male cop, is a reason why we call the police an occupying army. What this Mexicano went through on this New Year's evening is nothing new for colonized people. Working class or unemployed people of color, women, youth, and queer people deal with these experiences on a day to day basis. What is specific to this brother, is that he is an undocumented worker, who works two jobs that are usual for undocumented people of color. The car he was driving was a means to get to one exploiting job to another, then to get home to rest. This system benefits from his work and for a pay that no one can survive on; which is why he needs a second back-breaking job. The system forces this brother into the shadows through police repression, so the only work available are those two jobs. The police are a tool in this colonial system which oppresses people of color on stolen land, and created a border that only serves their imperialist interests.'

'We then dropped off the brother at his house, and told him to contact us when he had to go to court so that we can go there and support him. Even though we know that these are our experiences in our communities, one can't help but get emotional when you hear the stories that this brother



told us about his daily struggle.’

‘Two weeks before that patrol, on December 18, 2006, Cop Watch LA had another patrol in South Central. We had a similar traffic stop on Broadway Place near Martin Luther King Blvd. Two brown brothers were stopped by Latino male and white female cops. We got there early in the stop, and the two cops were just asking questions. There were four of us this time, one person with a video camera, one person taking notes, another was a police liaison, and the last was point on outreach and leafleting to the community.’

‘The police noticed us, and immediately changed their tone towards the people they had against the fence. They all of a sudden started smiling, and playing good cop. They allowed the two brothers to make phone calls, and they were able to get a family member with a license come and pick up their car so it wouldn’t be towed. This took them a while.

Eventually their family came, and we gave them flyers, the cops talked to them, and also saw the flyer in their hands and read it. They allowed the family to take the car, and even escorted the family with their siren on. This to us was new, we had never seen cops in South Central treat people this way, and we knew it was because we were there, and had our camera on them. One of the brothers who was stopped walked by and we gave him a flyer, one of the members of the patrol talked to him, and told him that the reason they let him go was because we were there, and he thanked us.’

There is an archive of these police encounters, and, given the fact that Cop Watch LA is one of about a half dozen similar organizations in the United States, there is a growing cinematic record of police transgression. Perhaps some future documentarian will draw on it for a feature about police repression and the popular response to it. For the time being, the example of Cop Watch LA and other groups like it show that direct action is still possible ‘The solidarity of others is our own defense’ as the Mexican anarchist militant Praxedis Gurrero put it



Never play leapfrog
with a unicorn

Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines

Sharia Law for England

Wait a minute! Who put this in?'

'It was Mustapha'

'Who is Mustapha?'

'He's the new trainee compositor'

'Well tell him to Fuck Off!'

'Mustapha?'

'Yes?'

'Fuck off'

A crank
is only
a crank
until
proved
correct
(Mark Twain)

I expect mummy has read
you the
story of
how Piglet and Twiglet fought
the election battle?
I bet you were very excited to
realise that by voting for Piglet half
the population end up having to
keep quiet while the other half
governs them?
If you were very clever
you'd have guessed that Piglet and
Twiglet were little different from
each other.

You wouldn't think so,
would you, to hear them go on at
each other?

But Piglet and Twiglet have
got to play a special game. They
have got to score points by making
the other look silly.

But don't tell any of your
friends about this story. That
would be very naughty and would
get daddy into trouble with grandma
- yes - the one with the big eyes and
big teeth.

Go to sleep now. Snuggle up
and don't let the nanny state bite!

YES!

Some people
walk in the rain;
others just get wet

that very moment when freedom
penetrates and sets itself into
the mind of the citizen the idea of
one person having power over another
becomes an outrageous joke

Occasionally you what
will catch bloody
a glimpse use is a
of the world bloody
and the realisation world

floods into when
you that it's
the Earth only
is really bloody
some glimpsed
fabulous from a
stage bloody
set. That cage?
is out
there is a
magnificent
setting for an
extraordinary
adventure in
living.

I need only
two things
from the
people in my
life: love and
respect. And
if you can't
give me one
of those
things, you
have no
place in
my life

(Harvey Fierstein)

Toddling is the sincerest form of contempt

VEA
A:B
[x:φ]:~x(φ)
VEA&B
VEA:B
VEA:A~[x:φ]:~x(A~B)

Those who tread the steps of the Laughing Philosopher



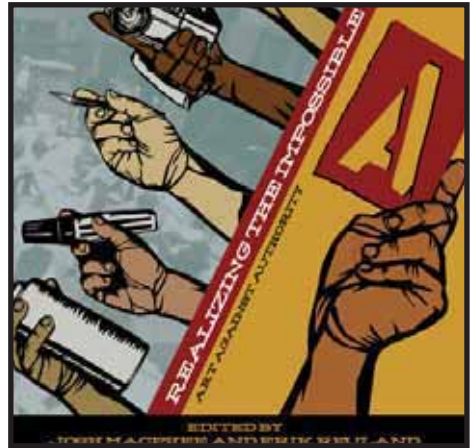
VIDEOTAPING A NEW WORLD ANARCHIST VIDEO AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21st CENTURY

Andrew Hedden

The cover of *Realizing the Impossible*, a 2007 anthology exploring anarchism and art, features a print by artist Erik Ruin illustrating a series of hands, each holding a tool of present-day anti-authoritarian art. There's a spray-paint can, a magic marker, an exacto knife, and — last but not least — a digital video camera. While all these tools are relatively new to the art world, and even newer to anarchist politics, none is more so than the video camera. In an essay from the book, Dara Greenwald, focuses on video collectives in the United States throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Greenwald makes it clear that anti-authoritarian politics and video share a long history together dating back at least to the birth of the medium. [1] However, it is only within the past decade or so, with the ascendancy of new digital technologies and the latest resurgence of anarchist politics globally, that their union has become undeniable.

Over the course of a month, I sought to survey the video practices of anarchists at present (2007), sending a small series of questions to as many anarchist video producers as I could find. Even given the incredibly narrow confines of my survey — only contacting those who self-identified as anarchists or were clearly (and consciously) influenced by anarchism, and then only those who could in English communicate via e-mail — I managed to e-mail over fifty individuals and groups. If this is how many anarchist video producers I could locate in one month, I can only imagine the many, many I missed. [2]

More than a dozen replies later, what is most clear is that



Realising The Impossible: Art Against Authority: Josh Macphee and Erik Reuland (Editor's), AK Press



Stills: viewers.

Berlusconi's

Mousetrap

— courtesy of

Eamonn

Crudden

every front. Video is used for everything from surveying the police to experimental films, from narrative shorts to journalistic broadcasts. Anarchists don't always agree as to what the best form for the medium is; each has its dangers as well as its benefits. If anarchist video producers have one thing in common, it is a focus on practice and relationships, striving towards a collaborative relationship between video producers themselves, as well as between videos and their

Video Killed the Movie Star

Anarchist film — as in movies on photographic film stock — has always been rather hard to come by. This could be because the anarchist movement was weakest during the years of film's ascendancy as a medium, roughly from World War II to the end of the century. It could also be due to the relatively prohibitive aspects of filmmaking itself. Film-making requires extensive technical training, and productions can be severely hierarchical, with the producer or director at the top and the rest of the crew at their whim. It is hard enough and expensive enough to get a film made; but once it is made, how then to distribute it? [3]



Stills courtesy
of Flux Rostrum

Digital technology has begun to make visual media-making more available, allowing for greater technical control; cheaper production costs; smaller, more collective creative processes; and easier distribution. Gauging from survey



responses, these are the very reasons anarchists are drawn to video. Compared to the burdens of film, notes Ishmahil Blagrove, Jr. of Rice N Peas Films, located in the United Kingdom, digital video is 'cheap, quick to edit, more user-friendly, and easier to use in documentary situations where you don't wish to carry intrusive,



large equipment'. Another respondent notes the 'otherwise free distribution' offered on the internet and public access television channels. FluxRostrum, an anarchist video producer and blogger, has conceived of a particularly ingenious form of distribution made possible by the new technology: whenever he's out to shoot an event, he usually carries several DVDs instead of business cards. The possibilities of on-line video distribution can even be applied back onto film; old Spanish anarchist films once found only in an archive like Madrid's Filmoteca Espanola are now readily available on the Internet.

However versatile, video is still a piece of manufactured technology; under capitalism, this means it is available to some people and denied to others. 'The truth is,' admits California, US-based artist Jessica Lawless, 'digital video isn't that affordable. Cameras, computers, and software, not to mention various other equipment and the need for duplication is expensive. One needs access to a university, community space, or trust fund.' A-Films, a video collective of anarchists in the Middle East, relate that 'the financial problem is always a pain in the ass. Equipment, even if it's only the most necessary things, costs a lot, and people in Lebanon and Palestine usually can't afford the stuff, or don't have ways to collect that money for themselves.' Meanwhile, anarchists involved in the MIP (a.k.a. Mobile Infoshop Project) based in Manila, Phillipines find the attitudes of others to be just as prohibitive. 'There are a lot of materials that we love to show to the community, but isn't accessible to us in the Third World. To be honest, it is not an issue of accessibility at all — there are people that are just plain greedy (capitalistic).'

"To fight and bypass": Video as alternative journalism

For all its material limitations, video has undeniably opened up new avenues for media-making, allowing for greater control over the means of production and greater degrees of self-representation, more so than capitalist channels of mainstream media and information ever have. Video's origins are in radio and broadcasting, so it should come as no surprise that many anarchists have come to video through journalism. The objective of alternative journalism is to combat capitalist media, hoping to create, in the words of Ishmahil Balgrove, Jr., 'an alternative, balanced and more

reality reflective media than currently on offer in the mainstream'. Alternative journalism has especially grown with the spread of global Indymedia networks. Survey respondents mentioned working with Indymedia collectives in Atlanta, Chicago, Ireland, Lima, Los Angeles, Manila, New Orleans, Rochester and Washington, DC.

The growth of Indymedia has, of course, been spurred by summit protests, as has the anarchist movement in general. Those surveyed mention protests in Prague, Quebec City, Genoa, and Gleneagles as galvanizing moments for becoming involved in video production projects. One respondent, Eamonn Crudden of Ireland, is currently researching a book 'about summit films... and the large ad-hoc collectives that form at these events to make different types of video/film.' White Raven, an anarchist with the Revolt Video Collective, also of Ireland, describes an important part of their work as 'reportage regarding current protests that have to be edited and uploaded before the piece becomes stale.' A video collective in Germany was unable to respond to the survey due to urgent media work for the anti-G8 protests in the town of Heiligendamm.

There is some worry that demonstrations and protests are given too much priority in video journalism. For instance, according to Marie Trigona, a member of Grupo Alavio, a radical video collective based in Buenos Aires, during the December 2001 uprisings in Argentina independent video activism blossomed. 'However, many filmmakers were only interested in the spectacular happenings [of the uprising] rather than the day-to-day struggle in unemployed worker organizations, land squats, trade union organizations, and recuperated enterprises'. [4] One way Grupo Alavio seeks to remedy this is by offering video workshops and skill-shares. By putting video in the hands of everyday people, the group is able to bypass Argentina's highly restrictive broadcasting regulations — dictatorship-era laws that remain on the books today.

The A-Films Collective, an anarchist media group working in Lebanon and Palestine, expressed similar frustration with protests. 'We're getting sick of watching demonstrations against anything. They haven't helped anything or changed anything so far. We have to change stuff ourselves. Directly.' Like Grupo Alavio, they offer media workshops to others, and produce the occasional video themselves, distributing

them on-line. 'Video work of course is very often "just" working to raise consciousness for issues,' they explain. 'However, in areas like Palestine it can be direct action.' A-Films describes the objectives of their work in opposition to mainstream media, explaining 'media activism is a useful and important tool to fight and bypass mainstream media, especially when it comes to places we've been working at, like war zones, occupation, etc. We think that people in the places where they are have much more possibilities and reasons to get their points of view out, and could make more use of what their eyes see on a daily basis'.

Walidah Imarisha, a poet and activist, is director and co-producer of *Finding Common Ground in New Orleans*, a documentary addressing the social injustices that took place during and after Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast of the United States. While editing her film, Imarisha formulated two objectives, both in conscious opposition to mainstream media accounts of the events in Louisiana. 'One [objective],' she says, 'was to show people the realities of what was going on, that are so very different than what the media was showing...' Her second objective was 'a reframing of the issues', casting the government as responsible for the broken levees, flooding, and devastation that followed the hurricane. In opposition to corporate interests seeking to rebuild New Orleans 'as a sort of McDisney/Mardi Gras land', Imarisha strived to 'show the people down there, mostly black working class folks, not as helpless victims but as folks who did and are organizing themselves for their own survival and growth'.

The Art of Video

While journalism is the most widely distributed of all anarchist video, not all anarchist video producers have come to the medium through journalism. A number of those responding to the survey had first come to the medium as artists, discovering that video could elicit a more powerful reaction from audiences and provide a catalyst for deeper discussions. According to Jessica Lawless, her initial attraction



Stills and flier from *Finding Common Ground in New Orleans* — courtesy of Walidah Imarisha



Stills: *Paint It Black* courtesy of Jessica Lawless

FluxRostrum, “most people will assume that I was exaggerating and not be very affected by the news. But, if I show you the cops jumping me and stealing my camera... from multiple angles... then there’s opportunity for waking up some people.’ This is, of course, the principle behind

to video was to ‘make art that can be mobile, that can elicit discussion via a format most people are used to dealing with, viewing, thinking about, interacting with’. Lawless’s first video was *Paint it Black*, a video essay addressing the relationships between North American media coverage of anarchism and race at global justice protests. She then shifted genres, going on to produce a comedy about five transgender guys and ‘their relationship to masculinity sans dick of flesh’. She writes that the medium has grown on her. ‘Now it is about video itself. I like it. I like the immediacy of digital video and I get off on editing.’ Walidah Imarisha writes that

while she came to the medium as a poet, she developed an appreciation for video over the course of editing and distributing her documentary feature. ‘There are times, I have learned, when words fail you, when there is no way to put into expression the pain and the loss that your eyes are taking in. Breath balks at the enormity of the task. This is the beauty of film.’

It is one of video’s unique qualities to document and convey reality cheaply and efficiently, in powerful ways that other forms of media, such as words or audio, often fail to do. ‘If I tell you about how the cops jumped me and stole my camera’, explains



CopWatch, a program often organized by anarchists that tails the police and documents their behavior, preventing them from committing abuses and catching them in the act when they do. For *CopWatch* and others, video has legal use as evidence, as battles with the State continue into court rooms. Video ‘can get people out of trouble in court’. writes White Raven, ‘and can keep the cops behaving or even capture police brutality and get them into hot water’.

Sometimes such documenting can backfire. White Raven continues: ‘On a protest that has civil disobedience or property destruction it is always a concern that you could be arrested, your tapes seized and that your footage could get people in trouble’. One story in the United States that has received a great deal of publicity is that of Josh Wolff, an anarchist and journalist based in California, US. Wolff eventually spent seven months in prison for refusing to turn over to authorities a tape of a protest at which a police officer was injured. While the tape turned out not to have any incriminating evidence, his story still illustrates some of the risks video producers take in their work.

Not all the risks of video are between the State and activists; they can also be between video producers and their subjects, or even between activists themselves. While filming *Finding Common Ground*, Walidah Imarisha ‘didn’t want to be voyeuristic about people’s tragedy and pain, and stick a camera in someone’s face saying, “Tell me about the worst thing that’s probably ever happened to you”’. Voyeurism and disconnection remain constant risks for any activist behind the camera. For Nick Cooper, director of *Soma: An Anarchist Therapy*, ‘While video is incredible at bringing it all together to put viewers in the same room with the action, that itself can be a cause that makes interviewees nervous’. Brazilian anarchists in Cooper’s film were hesitant to appear on camera criticizing other anarchists, fearing their comments, captured on tape, could open up anarchism to attacks from communist groups or from the State.

Hoping to expand the quality and scope of video’s unique possibilities, some anarchist video producers are beginning to wonder whether video as journalism — or at least journalism as an aesthetic — has exhausted its purpose. ‘Most of the work I see posted documenting radical culture is an amateurish (in a bad way) imitation of network journalism’, argues crabbed, an anarchist video producer with several

years experience in Indymedia projects. ‘I think we have reached the end of the road as far as using “grassroots citizens journalism” as an excuse’ Kyle Harris, another long-time anarchist video producer, extends similar criticisms of anarchist video in the essay ‘Beyond Authenticity: Aesthetic Strategies and Anarchist Media’, part of the collection *Realizing the Impossible*. Harris suggests that anarchists adopt more traditional narrative techniques such as characters and plotlines, and drop the more alienating and discordant aesthetic — complete with shaky video and incoherent screams and shouting — of the traditional protest video.

To Be, Or Not To Be (Anarchist)

Survey responses show that most anarchist video producers, like Harris, are very conscious of their audiences. True to their anti-authoritarian selves, most anarchist video producers even feel reticent about the use of the actual label ‘anarchist’ in their work, fearing they either might misrepresent their documentary subjects or pigeon-hole themselves if they were to use it. The term ‘anarchist’ certainly brings its own dangers and stigmas; one video producer even had a video screening shut down due to the very use of it. FluxRostrum explains his personal rationale: ‘While it is important to celebrate your culture from time to time, when the vast majority of people get their information regarding anarchy from biased mainstream news reports that use the word as synonymous with violence and chaos, I feel it is more valuable to drop breadcrumbs in their psyche’. Other video producers prefer the less ideological term ‘anti-authoritarian’, feeling that any ‘ism’ could ultimately recuperate oppression and inequity. Jong Pairez, a video artist based in Manila, expresses a common sentiment. ‘What is important is to use anarchist ideas as a methodology, rather than to be used by anarchist ideas.’



Still: *Homotopia*

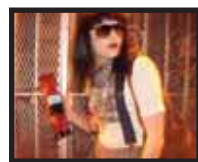
—courtesy of
Eric Stanley
and Chris
Vargas

Though anarchist video producers tend to shy away from discussing anarchism openly in their work, survey respondents used the word unabashedly to describe their process and methodology, what Eric Stanley, co-director of the radical queer film *Homotopia*, describes as an ‘anarchist ethic of film making that understands the conditions of production as also a political project’. Karl Hardy, a media activist who has produced several short videos for public access television and on-line distribution in the Midwest

United States, cites his 'behind-the-scene production work' as 'explicitly anarchist in the sense of it being a small, collaborative, and consensus-based group effort'. For the MIP, eight thousand miles away in Manila, the emphasis is strikingly similar. 'Our primary ideal is open collaboration. Basically, we are all the same thing (filmmakers, distributors, volunteers)... with one thing in common: to reach people (you know... getting the message across!!).'



In discussing the use of video in their organizing, the MIP extends this concern with collaboration to the relationship between video and spectator. According to the Project, while video materials are increasingly available in the Philippines due to the internet, such accessibility 'is constantly steering people from social and participatory events towards a more blank stare meta-environment. In other words, our developing (and Western media colonized) country is slowly (for lack of a better word) mimicking the West on that aspect'. Eric Stanley, co-director of *Homotopia*, is also wary of turning audiences into mere consumers. 'I feel allowing viewers to simply consume my work with no other intervention does little politically. So then I try to pair my work with more theoretical/historical talks linking moving images, colonialism and anti-queer violence.' Together with co-director Chris Vargas, Stanley conducts a program called 'queer/violence', showing their film in conjunction with other films and videos.



Stills:
Homotopia
—courtesy of
Eric Stanley
and Chris
Vargas

Taping — We Ask Questions

As digital video becomes cheaper and more widely available, anarchists are embracing it, but not uncritically. Throughout the thoughts and concerns raised in the above survey responses, an age-old anarchist tenet reveals itself, across continents, across subjects and varying formats of presentation: the ever-present need for corresponding means and ends. 'For me', writes Walidah Imarisha, 'anarchism is about a new reality, about building it in the here and now.' Anarchist video producers everywhere appear to agree with

her, as they wrestle with questions of how best to use video as a tool in building this new reality. For instance, how to document resistance while escaping scrutiny from the State? How to attract new audiences while celebrating a culture of resistance? How to transform video's spectators into active participants?

'I think the best thing video has done for anarchists is forcing us to consider what a self-portrait of anarchy might actually look like', writes crabbed, 'Which is kind of a scary thing because I think most of us have a kind of negative view about the strength or richness of anarchy as it exists now, and that looking at the fragmented picture we are getting (video is a big part of this, I think) is kind of a scary proposition'. Anarchist video may have a ways to go, as crabbed suggests, but these survey responses show that it is already on the move. As the Zapatista saying goes, 'Walking, we ask questions'. Undoubtedly, anarchist video producers ask their questions while walking: there aren't any big theoretical questions that must be answered before video production can start; these questions can be answered through the very work of video production itself. In other words, if anarchists are building a new world in the shell of the old, as the old Industrial Workers of the World slogan goes, anarchist video producers are surely taping it.

On the Web

A short list of respondents to the survey

A-Films

Autonomous anarchist film project currently based in Europe and the Middle East

<http://www.youtube.com/afilmspalestine>

Finding Common Ground

Short documentary that addresses the social injustice that took place during and after the hurricane Katrina disaster through the lens of poet and activist Wálidah Imarisha.

<http://www.myspace.com/channelzeromedia>

Fluxview, USA

A portal for Independent News Sources and Conscious Culture

<http://fluxview.com/>

Grupo Alavio

Radical video in Argentina

<http://www.revolutionvideo.org/alavio/>

Homotopia

A Radical Queer Film By Chris Vargas and Eric Stanley

<http://www.myspace.com/homotopiafilm>

MobFilms

<http://mobfilms.allotherplaces.org/>

Revolt Collective

Video activist collective in Ireland

<http://revoltvideo.blogspot.com/>

Rice N Peas Independent Documentary Films

<http://www.ricenpeas.com/index.html>

Soma – An Anarchist Therapy

<http://www.somadocumentary.com/>

SubMedia

<http://www.SubMedia.tv>

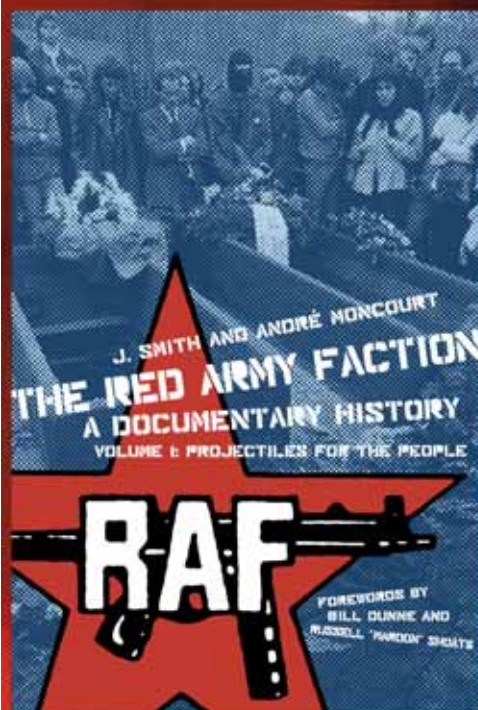
Tulisan TV

Radical video in the Philippines

<http://www.youtube.com/tulisanTV>

Notes

1. **Dara Greenwald**, 'The Process is in the Streets: Challenging Media America', *Realizing the Impossible: Art Against Authority*, ed. Josh Macphee and Erik Reuland (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2007), 168-179.
2. A word about definitions. While I generally limited the survey to self-identified anarchists, several of those I received responses from preferred other terms, such as artist and anti-authoritarian; this included several video producers who did not identify as anarchist but had completed films about anarchists. To respect the wishes of all survey respondents, I have done my best to describe them as they described themselves.
3. According to Richard Porton: 'The inequities of corporate globalization have, and always have had (since the beginning of cinema in 1895), an enormous impact on distribution patterns within the international film industry. For anyone who wants a more detailed explanation, extended discussions of this inescapable fact are included in various books, the best of which are probably the British Film Institute's *Global Hollywood 2* (ed. by Toby Miller et. al.) and **Jonathan Rosenbaum's** *Movie Wars: How Hollywood and the Media Limit What Films We Can See*. See 'Cinema/Utopia: An Interview with Richard Porton', Lucid Screening: http://www.lucidscreening.com/2006/12/cinema_utopia.html
4. **Marie Trigona**, 'Community Television in Argentina: Ágora TV, a Window for Liberation', International Relations Center: America's Program: <http://americas.irc-online.org/amcit/4173>



"Of all the revolutionary organizations to have been forged by the so-called sixties generation, the German Red Army Faction has been perhaps the most mythologized and maligned. Here at last is their story, told in their own words through official communications, comprehensively assembled and available for the first time in English translation. This is essential material for anyone wishing to know what they did, why they did it, and to draw consequent lessons from their experience."

—Ward Churchill author of
On the Justice of Roosting Chickens

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The Red Army Faction

Vol. 1: Projectiles for the People

The first in a two-volume series, this is by far the most in-depth political history of the Red Army Faction ever made available in English.

Projectiles for the People starts its story in the days following World War II, showing how American imperialism worked hand in glove with the old pro-Nazi ruling class, shaping West Germany into an authoritarian anti-communist bulwark and launching pad for its aggression against Third World nations. The volume also recounts the opposition that emerged from intellectuals, communists, independent leftists, and then an explosively lithe radical student movement and countercultural revolt of the 1960s.

It was from this revolt that the Red Army Faction emerged, an underground organization devoted to carrying out armed attacks within the Federal Republic of Germany, in the view of establishing a tradition of illegal, guerilla resistance to imperialism and state repression. Through its bombs and manifestos the RAF confronted the state with opposition at a level many activists today might find difficult to imagine.

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Providing the background information that readers will require to understand the context in which these events occurred, separate thematic sections deal with the 1976 murder of Ulrike Meinhof in prison, the 1977 Stammheim murders, the extensive use of psychological operations and false-flag attacks to discredit the guerilla, the state's use of sensory deprivation torture and isolation wings, and the prisoners' resistance to this, through which they inspired their own supporters and others on the left to take the plunge into revolutionary action.

Drawing on both mainstream and movement sources, this book is intended as a contribution to the comrades of today (and to the comrades of tomorrow) both as testimony to those who struggled before and as an explanation as to how they saw the world, why they made the choices they made, and the price they were made to pay for having done so.

ARENA

'*Arena*, like its predecessor, *The Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review*, aims to tap into the rich seam of libertarian ideas, culture, history and practice by providing a focal point for anarchist debate. The journal will bring together stimulating writing and scholarship on all aspects of libertarian culture, arts, life and politics and hopefully provoke discussion, polemic and debate in the process. Designed for a general, critically-minded readership *Arena* will cover the entire spectrum of the arts: film, theatre, art, criticism, ideas, political theory and practice, reportage, fiction and nonfiction.'



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